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CHRISTENDOM AND ISLAM

The Haskell Lectures
for 1936-37

CHRISTENDOM AND ISLAM

*Their Contacts and Cultures
Down the Centuries*

THE HASKELL LECTURES
*Given in the Graduate School of Theology
Oberlin College, 1936-37*

By
W. WILSON CASH



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CHRISTENDOM AND ISLAM

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TO

EDMUND TYDEMAN

LATE OF THE INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE IN THE
PUNJAB; MY FRIEND AND FELLOW-WORKER

THE HASKELL LECTURESHIP was founded in 1905 by a bequest of Mrs. Caroline E. Haskell of Chicago to provide an annual series of lectures on some phase of the influence of Christianity on the life and religion of the Near and Middle East.

Preface

ISLAM in its inception contained a mass of curious misconceptions and misunderstandings of Christianity. When every allowance has been made for the period in which he lived and the superstitions of the times it is baffling to find Mohammed speaking of the Trinity as "God, Mary and Jesus." Why he denied the fact of the crucifixion creates a problem that history has never solved.

These erroneous representations of basic Christian belief became stereotyped into dogmas as the mechanical views of the inspiration of the Koran developed.

The expansion of Islam brought with it similar misunderstanding of Moslems on the part of Christians, and the early wars completed a process of cleavage and antagonism which has never been healed to this day.

The earliest records of Christian missionary work reveal a method of attack. Controversy was the main line of approach from the Christian to the Moslem and the divisions were thus further emphasized. This method was carried over to modern times by the nineteenth century missionaries, and Christian evangelism among Moslems was largely based upon an assault upon Islam, its prophet, its doctrines and its

practices, coupled with a dogmatic presentation of the Christian faith. Missionaries wondered why there was no response and why Moslems seemed so little attracted by Christianity.

In my earlier days as a missionary I studied controversy and examined the Koran critically for the purpose of argument and debate. But I came to realize the utter futility of it all and ultimately to discard controversy entirely as a method of approach to Moslems. For years I searched for a key to the Moslem mind, a way of approach that would not antagonize, and a presentation of Christian belief that would not alienate. My study of Moslem history showed me that through centuries of bitter strife and conflict between the two faiths there had always been small bodies of both Moslems and Christians whose love of art, science and literature had enabled them to transcend their differences and to find common ground in their mutual thirst for knowledge. I asked myself, Is there anything similar in the two religions which would enable Moslems and Christians alike to approach the subject of their faith in a better spirit?

This led me to study the contributions of the one religion to the other and to compare elements in each drawn from the other. As long as I studied the subject from the standpoint of Christian dogma or Mos-

lem orthodoxy I could find nothing that gave me hope, and that in spite of the fact that there were so many similarities in the two religions. The surface agreements only helped really to emphasize the fundamental and deep theological cleavages.

Living as I did in the villages of Egypt I had many opportunities of studying Islam at first hand and I became very much intrigued by the strength of the dervish orders. As far as I could calculate I estimated that about half the people in Egypt were connected in one way or another with these dervish sects. This opened up a new avenue of investigation. I asked myself—Are these people sincere? If so what are they gaining from the eccentricities of the *zikh* and other ceremonies? I ultimately came to know some of the dervish leaders and with true Arab courtesy they showed me their books of devotion and explained the aims of their movement. They were seekers after God. They sought a spiritual experience through meditation upon God that would help them in their lives. This drove me back to a further study of the influences of mysticism upon Islam.

I soon found myself in an atmosphere where controversy was eliminated and where Christians and Moslems embarked upon a common quest for God where they shared spiritual experiences and lived only for a fuller realization of communion with the

Infinite. The issue was clarified in my mind as I realized that I could frankly recognize the sincerity of the quest by my Moslem friends. Was it merely a quest or did the Dervishes find in any sense a spiritual experience that was real? I came to the conclusion that I could frankly accept the reality of their experience without in any way detracting from my own conviction that in and through Christ men find ultimate reality.

For years I carried on my research and after coming to live in England further ideas matured in my mind on the Christian approach to Islam. One day at Cambridge, England, I met a kindred spirit in Mr. F. W. Buckler, now professor of Church History at the School of Theology, Oberlin, Ohio. Across the lunch table we talked of Islam and we quickly discovered that we had much in common. This discussion led ultimately to my receiving an invitation from Dr. Graham, the Dean of the School of Theology at Oberlin, to deliver the Haskell lectures in 1936. I gratefully accepted the Faculty's kind invitation as I knew it would give me an opportunity of working out the theme in my mind of a new way of approach to the Moslem. The lectures have been written in the midst of a very busy life as secretary of the Church Missionary Society in London. They are an attempt to show that controversy is a futile

line of approach both from Christian to Moslem and Moslem to Christian. The methods of missionaries a generation ago in the Near East are being copied in full today by Moslem propagandists in America and England who attempt to win converts to Islam by a direct assault on the Christian religion. Both Moslem and Christian as long as they use this method are in a vicious circle from which there is no escape.

I have tried to bring out the principle that force as a weapon of religious expansion is equally futile. This is illustrated both from the Moslem and the Christian side and as the lectures show this principle brings us face to face with the implications of the Cross in human experience.

I have written frankly from the Christian standpoint, for a study of Islam of more than thirty years leaves me with the clear conviction that if Moslems are to find fullness of life and spiritual experience it will only be as Christ is acknowledged as Lord and Master. I believe that ultimately Moslems will see (as the leaders of other great religions will see) that Christ is not in the category of prophet and seer. He is not one among many—to be classed with Confucius, Buddha and Mohammed. Christ can therefore be presented to all the world as the hope of mankind without it being necessary to decry or vilify sages and leaders of other ages. He is the Revelation

of God to mankind, and because of this He is the crown of all religions. In Him are summed up the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is as one has said "The express image of God's person."

May I express my indebtedness to the President of the College, the Dean and Faculty of the School of Theology, and to my many friends at Oberlin for their generous and sympathetic help so freely accorded to me. Oberlin days will for me always carry the fragrant memory of lasting friendships.

I would like particularly to express my very grateful thanks to Mr. F. W. Buckler, professor of Church History, Oberlin, and to Dr. A. L. Warnshuis of the International Missionary Council for their generous and kindly help and advice in connection with the publication of these lectures.

W. WILSON CASH

Note: As these lectures are intended for the general reader as well as for the specialist, the author has decided to retain the customary spelling of Arabic words rather than to follow the more technical methods of transliteration, and to avoid, as far as possible, the use of diacritical marks and italics. The specialist will not need them, while their use serves, all too frequently, to distract and alarm the ordinary reader.

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CHRISTENDOM AND ISLAM

Chapter One

Islam—an Eclectic Faith

THE epic story has often been told how an orphaned camel driver in Mecca became the ruler of a nation, the unifier of warring Arab tribes, the founder of a great world religion, and the chief instrument in the creation of an empire which stretched from India and China in the East through southwest Asia and the Mediterranean to Spain in the West. Whatever estimate we may entertain of Mohammed's character we cannot fail to recognize in him one of the creative forces of the world who, by the strength of his personality, has won the devotion and allegiance of millions of people.

We shall understand Mohammed only as we succeed in appreciating Arab mentality and character. Dr. Harrison describes a typical Arab as "a son of nature, moderately tall, almost always lean and hungry-looking, with a prominent, more or less aquiline nose, his whole physical form appears as a setting for his magnificent black eyes, which seem to pierce one's very soul."¹ He is unique among men in many re-

¹ *The Arab at Home*, p. 1.

spects. His powers of endurance, his sense of direction, his love of hospitality, all acquired through the influence of his desert environment, mark him out from among men.

His life is spent in an implacable desert that has left its stamp upon the Arab character. The land is mostly parched and dry with wide stretching sandy plains. The heat is intense and shade is impossible except in the oases. In this desert "is to be seen clean, naked, and beautiful, the omnipotence of God and His stern silent beauty. His immutability is there and His strength, and above all, His greatness. What is man that Thou art mindful of him? That may be a man, that speck on the yellow sand dune, miles to the left. The slightly larger speck with him is probably his camel. Yes, they are moving. It is a man. Fifty miles away perhaps there is another man, who knows? What is man when one stands in the presence of Omnipotent God, with the blue sky above, as clear and bright and pure as His own holiness, and all around, the great yellow desert as inscrutable and resistless as His own will?"²

If the Arab feels the strength of the desert and fears nought but the Creator of it, none the less a bitter poverty enters deeply into his life. Home life, as most people understand it, is denied to this son of

² *The Arab at Home*, p. 181.

the desert. His wants are few and his possessions small, but never in his long history has he suffered from a sense of inferiority. He looks grimly upon a pampered outside world and neither the wealth of Damascus, Cairo, and Baghdad, nor the scientific achievements of the West have ever given him any feeling of being inferior. He stands before you erect, alert, and alive, the equal of all the world, and with his sense of equality goes too his fierce independence, his love of liberty, his refusal to own allegiance to any except his own sheikh. He is, therefore, a confirmed individualist, working in isolation from the rest of the world, playing a lone hand, but always preferring his life of hardship, danger, and toil with its spacious desert freedom, to the cramped and restricted life of city and town.

In this country of desert and oasis, and among a people divided into numerous tribes, ever at war, resentful and quick to avenge a wrong, independent and wild, there grew up the man of the hour—Mohammed. The influences that helped to mold this Arab of the Arabs were, as we have seen, many. He shared all the Arab's love of independence, hospitality, and tribal loyalties, but he had a religious temperament different from many of his people. His retirement to a cave for meditation and the epilepsy from which he is reputed to have suffered, revealed a

highly strung, religious temperament. In later years when Ayesha, his favorite wife, was asked about Mohammed she said, "He was a man just such as yourselves. He laughed often and smiled much. He would mend his clothes and cobble his shoes. He used to help me in my household duties, but what he did most often was to sew." This is probably an accurate description of the Prophet's private life—an ordinary Arab, but, like others of his fellow countrymen, astute and bold, with a passionate love for his country.

Opinions on the character of Mohammed have widely differed. Dante consigned the Prophet to the Inferno and depicts him as suffering the tortures of the damned. Voltaire, from a different standpoint, attacks Mohammed as a camel-dealer who stirred up rebellion and who gave the world a book in which "every page does violence to sober reason." "The man," he asks, "who makes war against his own country and who dares to do this in the name of God, is he not capable of anything?" The Swedish professor Tor Andrae, in his *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith* says, "That Mohammed's inspiration was genuine in the psychological sense has already been emphasized. It is hardly believable that a man could have won such absolute confidence, or could have made such an impression upon his surroundings, had he not possessed an overwhelming and convincing

faith in his own message. Mohammed regarded his call with the utmost sincerity; he felt his heart tremble before the King of the Day of Judgment, and he responded to his prophetic commission with fear and trembling."³

That he was no ordinary Arab is seen from the way he won the hand of Khadija, a widow lady of high birth and of considerable wealth. That he sincerely believed in himself and made others believe in him is proved from the way he preached in Mecca, attacked the idolatry of the city, and endangered his life in the cause he advocated. Was he a visionary prophet who, when opportunity came to him, suddenly changed his role into that of a military commander? I think not. The picture we must imagine is that of a young Arab patriot, far-seeking, and alert, who through his knowledge of Arabia saw the fatal weakness of tribal life with its blood feuds, factions and strife, and who from his camel journeys discovered the danger to his freedom-loving countrymen from the continuous pressure of the Emperor. The strength of Imperial Rome was ranged against a divided desert people, and the Emperor was continually seeking to unite the tribes, not in any Arab cause, but for the defense of Rome against the Persian forces which continually threatened them. Moham-

³ *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, p. 250.

med saw also how the Emperor made use of Christianity to further his political schemes and how the Christian Church was the tool of the State and subservient to it. He must indeed have been repelled from Christianity because of its State connections. For him to become a Christian would have meant the sacrifice of his liberty and the acceptance of Roman rule. Gradually there formed in his mind the idea of a national religious movement, born in the desert, that would draw these sundered tribes together into a single compact force for the worship of the one God and for the maintenance of their liberties and independence. But how could such an idea be converted into action? Had he proclaimed his plan at the beginning he would probably have ended his life at the hands of an assassin. Here his study of religion came to his help. From what he could gather from his untutored reading of the Jewish Scriptures he saw that religion was a State affair in which Moses, acting on behalf of the Almighty, led his tribesmen from a wilderness life to the promised land, and this conviction was confirmed from the way the Emperor of Constantinople controlled the Christian Church and made it his tool for advancing his political plans. Moreover, Moses had declared the unity of God and had continually fought against idolatry in all its forms whenever it appeared in Israel. Thus the idea

developed in Mohammed's mind that if the Arabs could be persuaded to accept a belief in the one God and cast away their idols, then his position, like that of Moses, as prophet and spokesman of God, was assured.

There is nothing incompatible in Mohammed's profound conviction that on the one hand he was summoned by God to preach the Divine Unity and to abolish idolatry, and that on the other hand his mission had a political and world significance. Most biographies of the Prophet lay stress upon his religious character and as his life develops excuse or accuse him for many of his actions in the Medina or later period of his life, but Mohammed was always a very human prophet and very Arab in his character. In him were blended qualities of spiritual aspiration with a fierce vindictiveness against his opponents. It was in his contacts with the outside world that he received many of his religious impressions, and it was his study of life beyond the frontiers of Arabia that must have opened his eyes to see the perilous position in which his country was placed as a buffer-State between two great world powers. His ideas about his country and God were not separated issues. He had none of the sharp distinctions of the Western mind that often kept religion and politics apart. His ideal state was theocratic, not democratic.

These ideas did not take shape all at once, but the Jewish conception of God as One gripped his imagination. When he meditated on this, his mystical temperament carried him to dreams and visions. When he tried to interpret his meditations to his friends, he reverted once more to the cautious typical Arab. The remarkable thing is that those who knew him best and who lived in closest touch with him were the first to become his converts.

Dr. Marcus Dodds in his *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ* says, "Mohammed had two of the most important characteristics of the prophetic order. He saw truth about God, which his fellow men did not see, and he had an irresistible inward impulse to publish truth. In respect of this latter qualification Mohammed may stand comparison with the most courageous of the heroic prophets of Israel. For the truth's sake he risked his life, he suffered daily persecution for years, and eventually banishment, the loss of property, of the goodwill of his fellow citizens, and of the confidence of his friends; he suffered in short, as much as any man can suffer, short of death, which he only escaped by flight, and yet he unflinchingly proclaimed his message. No bribe, threat, or inducement could silence him. 'Though they arrayed against me the sun on the right hand and the moon on the left, I cannot renounce my purpose.' And it

was this persistency, this belief in his call to proclaim the unity of God, which was the making of Islam."

We reach the point now of a young Arab with what today would be called a nationalist spirit, pondering deeply over his country and the threatened danger of absorption by either Rome on the west or Persia on the east. He saw his country not only divided into tribes and factions, but without any potential center of unity because of its very religion, with its multiplicity of gods, making for disunion. Naturally in a man of Mohammed's temperament religion was the key to the situation. He was throughout his life an opportunist and his policy unfolded as circumstances permitted. Although the earlier or Meccan period revealed nothing of the military ambition which afterwards so dominated his life, yet his plan for using force if occasion offered must have been in his mind. The fact that the Meccans began to organize a force immediately after the flight of the Prophet to Medina indicates that they regarded Mohammed's preaching as having a more than religious significance. His organization of armed forces to capture Meccan caravans was the first indication that he would achieve his purpose by the sword. We have in Mohammed a political-religious Arab, who at any rate in the early stages of Islam, sincerely believed that he had a mission from God. He used his prophetic

office at times in convenient ways to secure his end. He found that the easiest way out of awkward situations, whether domestic or political, was to produce a revelation from Allah to suit the occasion. He was, as has already been observed, a very human prophet, and the mixture of sincerity and expediency blend together in so remarkable a way that his followers, although they complained at times, always ended by giving him an undivided allegiance.

Carlyle, in his lecture, *The Hero as Prophet*, says "They called him Prophet, you say? Why, he stood there face to face with them; bare, not enshrined in any mystery; . . . fighting, counseling, ordering in the midst of them; they must have seen what sort of a man he *was*. Let him be *called* what you like! No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three and twenty years of rough actual trial I find something of a veritable Hero necessary for that of itself." Non-Moslems of Arabia saw the character of Mohammed in truer perspective and their satires have ultimately to be paid for with their lives.

"In the development of a religion, fiction has scarcely less importance than fact. In order to understand the rise of Islam it is necessary to be acquainted with the historical Mohammed—the man of extreme caution and extreme intrepidity; who made by force

his merit known; who gauged with exactitude the intellect and the character of his associates and his adversaries; for whom every fortress had its key and every man his price; whom no opportunity escaped, no scruple deterred, and no emergency found unprepared. But for the continuance and development of the system probably the fictitious Mohammed was the more significant: the legislator, the saint, and the thaumaturge.”⁴

In the early period the Prophet was in close touch with Jewish teaching, and the Meccan Suras of the Koran contain numerous references to the Jews and the Old Testament. Judaism undoubtedly exercised an important molding influence on Mohammed particularly in his monotheistic conception of God and his ideas of a prophetic office and of a theocratic State in which God rules through his agent on earth, and in this case it was to be Mohammed.

Many of the incidents of the Old Testament are mentioned in the Koran. The stories as given are mixed with rabbinical fable and are recorded as Mohammed heard and remembered (or forgot) them. The stories of the Creation, Adam and Eve, the Fall, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Ark, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel are all recorded. Abraham

⁴ Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, *The Early Development of Mohammedanism*, p. 258.

is the friend of God, a prophet with whom Mohammed always felt akin in spirit. Other Old Testament stories recorded in the Koran are those of Lot, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Balaam, Solomon, and Jonah.

Judaism also supplied many koranic doctrines, for example, the Unity of God, the ministry of angels, prayer, the law of retaliation, and the stoning of adulterers. So great, indeed, is the contribution of Judaism to Islam that the latter may be regarded as an Arab Judaism with Mohammed as prophet instead of Moses.

If we turn from Judaism to Christianity we again find an influence that went a long way to mold the Prophet. It was a strange irony of fate that the "Prince of Peace" should have been so represented by His followers and by the State patronage of Christianity as to give the impression that religion was an area of the State and a great asset in the expansion of State influence in the world. Mohammed never seems to have been given any real picture of Christ, and if the Koran gives us a distorted and twisted account of Christianity, it is largely because the Christians of his day so faultily represented Him. It is true, however, to say that most of the great religious ideas of Islam are common either to Judaism or to Christianity.

The Church of the seventh century had estab-

lished itself along the borders of Arabia in what is now known as Transjordan and Iraq. In the Yemen in South Arabia Christianity had also become strongly intrenched and was exercising a civilizing influence upon the Arabs. At the time of the birth of Mohammed Arabia was in a transition stage. The old paganism, which was tribal and polytheistic, sanctioned many customs that were crude and horrible. Female infanticide was practiced. Polygamy was common, and religion was animistic. It was into these conditions that there came the ferment of new thought which was partly religious and partly political. Jewish and Christian ideas however faulty, were percolating through the desert, and already new cults were springing up. The Hanifs, for example, were a sect formed for the worship of one God, and they were at the time looking for a leader. The ground was prepared for a new movement, but Arabia being what it was, a condition of success was that it should be Arab in content and type, and for this reason both Judaism and Christianity were rejected as foreign and therefore unsuitable. Out of this welter of ideas came the religion of Islam.

In the expansion of Christianity in that period there seems to have been no idea of making the Church indigenous. On the other hand, everything seems to have been done to emphasize its Greek

character. Harnack says, "There are no pre-Mohammed translations of the Bible into Arabic, and that is strong proof that Christianity has not found any footing at all among the Arabs in early times." Bell, too, tells us in *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment* (page 17) that "the language of Christianity in the East was Aramaic or Syriac and there is no evidence of a Christian Church using Arabic in its services. The nature of Mohammed's own mission which was to be the prophet of his own people and to give them a Holy Book in their own language is confirmation of that point of view."

It is significant that Mohammed supplied for the Arabs just those elements which, if they had been provided by Christianity at an earlier date, would have made the Church a national, indigenous body with its own Arab expression. He gave them a book in their own tongue, and composed in a style that was beloved by all Arabs. They were illiterate but they would listen for hours together to recitals of stories mainly taken from the Bible, stories spoken not in dull prose but in a rhythm that has a peculiar charm for all who know the language. He presented religion to them as a great adventure and he centered their faith in the simple dogma of the unity of God. He attracted his followers to himself and made Islam a matter of personal loyalty and allegiance. Every

Arab who became a Mohammedan felt that the Prophet belonged to him. He was a son of the desert. He lived their life and understood their point of view. While they had refused to give up their idols and their pagan customs for the Christian appeal, they readily accepted Islam. To them one faith was foreign and the symbol of a foreign power, the other was indigenous and offered security and independence.

“Had Christianity produced a deep impression upon Arabia it would no doubt have burst through the conventions which confined poetry to the subject and temper of the old desert life, or at least have produced a religious literature of its own. But it was left to Islam to bring that impulse, if indeed Islam did convey it to the Arabs of the desert.”⁵

Christianity failed, as we have seen, to grip the Arab mind, because of its schisms and divisions, and Mohammed in his study of Christianity reflects in the Koran all the errors of the day, the misconceptions of our faith and the theological controversies. At its best, his knowledge of the Christian religion was limited, as, for example, when he thought of the Sacrament of baptism as the dyeing of a Christian's clothes. His story of the Lord's Supper, as given in the chapter in the Koran entitled 'El Maida' or

⁵ R. Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*, p. 50.

'The Table,' is grotesque and shows a complete ignorance of the essentials of our faith. The account reads as follows: "The Apostles said, 'O Jesus, Son of Mary, is Thy Lord able to send down a furnished table to us out of heaven?' He said, 'Fear God, if ye be believers.' They said, 'We desire to eat therefrom and to have our hearts assured; and to know that Thou hast indeed spoken truth to us and to be witnesses thereof.' Jesus, Son of Mary, said, 'O God, our Lord, send down a table to us out of heaven that it may become a recurring festival to us.'" To this God replies with the promise that a table shall be let down from heaven for their nourishment. He threatens dire chastisement upon any who disbelieve after so signal a miracle. More serious still is the confusion in the Prophet's mind regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. The Koran declares that Christians are tritheists worshipping God, Jesus, and Mary. Chapter 5 of the Koran says, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, hast thou said unto mankind, 'Take me and my mother as two Gods beside God?' He shall say, 'Glory be unto thee. It is not for me to say that which I know to be not the truth.'"

Mohammed also entirely misunderstood the Sonship of our Lord and refers to the idea of God having a Son with abhorrence. The Koran—Chapter 19—says, "It beseemeth not God to beget a Son. When He

decreeth a thing He only saith to it 'Be' and it is." "God neither begets nor is begotten," declared the Prophet and thus from the beginning the doctrine of the Sonship of Christ has been a stumbling block to Moslems. The denial of the crucifixion of Christ is another of the koranic statements. Chapter 4 states: "God hath sealed them (the Jews) up for their unbelief and for their saying, 'Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus, the Son of Mary, an Apostle of God.' Yet they slew Him not and they crucified Him not, but they had only His likeness. . . . They did not really slay Him but God took Him up to Himself." A curious historical error is Mohammed's confusion of Mary the Mother of Jesus with Mary the sister of Aaron. Mohammed thought they were the same person!

So difficult did Christianity seem to Mohammed that he turned from it and modeled his new religion on the Old Testament pattern rather than the Gospel. In spite of this, however, Mohammed revered and respected Jesus Christ as he did no other prophet. He accepts the Virgin birth as a fact and says "Jesus, the Son of Mary, from whom He was born by the power of God." Christ is called in the Koran 'Isa' or 'Jesus,' the Messiah, the Word of God, the Word of truth, a Spirit from God, the Messenger of God, the Servant of God, and the Prophet of God.

A story of the life of Our Lord can be reconstructed from the Koran and the traditions of Islam. It would read somewhat like this. Jesus Christ was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron. The Jews accused Mary of being unchaste, but Jesus, speaking as a babe in His cradle, vindicated His mother. When He was a boy He performed many miracles. He made birds of clay and then gave them life. As a man He opened the eyes of the blind, He healed the lepers, and raised the dead. In His teaching He foretold the advent of another prophet whose name should be Ahmad (meaning Mohammed). The Jews sought to crucify Him, but God stamped His likeness on another man (the prophet probably had Judas in mind) who was crucified, whereas Christ was caught up to heaven. After He left this earth, the disciples began to call Him God, making Him one of Three—the Father, the Mother, and the Son. Because Christ did not die He will come again at the last day and will wage war against anti-Christ and slay him. He will reign as a King for forty-five years, during which time He will marry and have children, and on His death He will be buried near Mohammed in Medina. Enough has been said to show what a travesty of the Christian faith is given in the Koran. But crude and erro-

neous as it is the image of Christ stands out as a unique figure of history, One who was holy and pure.

In one of the Moslem traditions it is related by Anas that Mohammed, while admitting his own sinfulness and the sins of other prophets, declared Christ to be free from all taint of sin. His words are—"In the day of the Resurrection Moslems will say, 'Would to God we had asked Him to create someone to intercede for us that we might be delivered from tribulation and sorrow.'" The tradition then describes how they will go to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others, who will all admit that they cannot intercede because of sins in their own lives. The story goes on, "They will go to Moses, and Moses will say, 'I am not of that degree which ye suppose,' and he will say, 'Go to Jesus. He is the Servant of God, the Apostle of God, the Spirit of God, and the Word of God.'"

One further koranic reference is necessary. Mohammed claimed, as we have seen, that Christ foretold his coming. The Koran (Chapter 61) says "Jesus, the Son of Mary, said, 'I am God's Apostle to confirm the law and to announce an Apostle that shall come after me whose name shall be Ahmad.'" What had put this idea into his mind? It arose through a confusion of Greek words. He had heard of the Paraclete (*παράκλητος*) referred to in St. John

6, 7, and he confused the word with (*περικλυτός*) — he praised. Now Mohammed in Arabic carries much the same meaning as “periclytos” does in Greek, as it is derived from the verb “to praise,” but it has not the remotest connection with the word used in St. John’s Gospel for the Comforter. Through this error the whole of the New Testament teaching about the Holy Spirit was lost to Islam, and commentators assert that by the term “the Holy Spirit” the prophet meant the Angel Gabriel.

It is significant that in the picture of Christ given by Mohammed much in the essential character of our Lord is missing. Such traits as love, service, sacrifice, and humility, are not brought out, the teaching about loving one’s enemies is omitted, and for the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount are substituted an Arab standard of values. Once having embarked upon this pathway, the Prophet obviously took from both Old and New Testament what suited his propaganda. In several important points he seems willingly to have departed from Christian ethics. Divorce was to be made easy and at the will of the husband; polygamy was allowed and the position of woman rated to be inferior to that of man, and slavery was sanctioned in the name of Allah. On the other hand Mohammed purged Arabia of idolatry and swept away infanticide and other pagan customs.

The thing more than any other that carried Islam beyond Arabia in its aspiration to conquer the world was the policy of *jihad* or holy war. The verses on the subject in the Koran were written during the Medina period when war was declared against Mecca. It all arose in a simple way. The Meccans who had fled to Medina had no means of livelihood, for they had broken their tribal links on which all life in Arabia was based. Mohammed therefore bound his people to himself as a newly formed tribe. Now no Arab regarded tribal warfare as wrong. It was practiced by everyone and raids had gone on from time immemorial, so when Mohammed sought to capture a Meccan caravan he was only doing what any other Arab sheikh would have done. Where Mohammed differed from other Arab leaders in this practice was that he gave a religious significance to his raids and developed his theme into a *jihad* and called upon his followers to "kill those who join other gods with God, whenever ye shall find them." A double incentive was given to his followers to fight. They were promised a fair share in all the spoil, and if they were killed in battle Paradise would open to them joys beyond their wildest dreams. They were to enrich themselves by plunder and at the same time to summon all to obedience to the Prophet. This is set forth in the following passage, "Say to the infidels:

If they desist from their unbelief what is now past shall be forgiven them; but if they return to it they have already before them the doom of the ancients! Fight then against them till strife be at an end, and the religion be all of it God's."

Another saying attributed to the Prophet declares that "War is permanently established until the Day of Judgment." The world was divided into two parts—the Dar-ul-Islam (the House of Islam), and the Dar-ul-Harb (the House of War), and in orthodox Islam this division still stands.

We have, therefore, before us the picture of two religions, the one espoused by an Emperor who adroitly used the influence of the Church for empire purposes and regarded the Christian teaching on the Kingdom of God as synonymous with the Byzantine dominion. The conception of religion in the Christian world of the seventh century was largely rule sustained by force and in the name of Christ. The other religion, Islam, borrowing from misrepresentations of Christianity and from the martial stories of the Old Testament also adopts force as the instrument for the spread of religion. In the case of Christianity the message and the meaning of the Cross are driven into the background, and although much lip service was done to the memory of the Crucified, yet the Cross did not direct policy nor did it inspire

the leaders of the nation. In the case of Islam, Mohammed possibly saw the implications of the Cross and their incompatibility with his ideas of religion—possibly he ignorantly adopted an old Gnostic heresy—but whatever the reason, the fact remains that Mohammed did not merely drive the Cross into the background, he cut it out of his religion entirely by denying the Crucifixion. This fact opens up many avenues for investigation, but for the purposes of these studies we must confine our thoughts to the issue of the use of force in religion or the pathway of the Cross.

[When Constantine the Great gave his patronage to Christianity and made the Christian faith a factor in State policy, he was laying the foundations for the collapse of Christianity four centuries later through an invading Moslem army. A Church, flooded with a large body of nominal Christians—pagan in thought and character—exposed itself to disaster. But the underlying principle is clear—a Church that loses the centrality of the Cross loses its life as well as its power. We can trace this through the subsequent events in history. The effects of the use of force as a religious policy on both religions have given territorial gains, an increase in the number of adherents, and a political significance to religion

which has frequently stripped it of its ethical and moral value.

The enduring contributions of these two religions the one to the other have always been those detached from politics and armies. In the realm of faith the mystic experience of God has been shared by members of Islam and Christianity; in the sphere of art, literature, and architecture, the thinkers and writers of every age since Mohammed have lived detached from the clash of arms and the hatreds engendered by wars. War, whether the *Jihad* of Islam or the Crusades of the Christians, has made no contribution to the religious values of the world.

In the Crusades we have the surging up of religious fervor for the recapture of the Holy City from the infidel. Christians of the eleventh century regarded the Crusades as a Holy War in much the same way as Moslems felt about their *Jihad*. The tragedy of it was that the Crusades were to be a pilgrimage towards the Holy Sepulchre! Thus the Cross and its message of love, of humility and sacrifice, was made the basis for using force in the defence of religion. Mohammed in his lifetime probably never saw any other aspect of Christianity than this in which faith depended on force for its protection and imperial patronage for its support. Having learnt his lesson from a so-called Christian Kingdom, Mo-

hammered and his followers applied it with disastrous results to the Christian Church. As we shall see in subsequent chapters it is as true of a community as of an individual, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Byzantine Rome in its use of the Church as a political tool sowed the seeds of its own destruction, and the Church in its departure from the principle of the Cross paved the way for its overthrow and subsequent subjugation.

Thus we see Islam, imitating others, starting its career on force and summoning the world to belief in God with a conquering army behind it. Thus we see Christianity, committed more than ever to the same policy, and using armies in defence of religion. Professor Barker, in an article on the Crusades, says, "The knight who joined the Crusades might still indulge the bellicose side of his genius—under the aegis and at the bidding of the Church; and in so doing he would also attain what the spiritual side of his nature ardently sought—a perfect salvation and remission of sins. He might butcher all day, till he waded ankle deep in blood, and then at nightfall kneel, sobbing for very joy, at the altar of the Sepulchre—for was he not red from the wine press of the Lord? One can readily understand the popularity of the Crusades when one reflects that they permitted men to get to the other world by hard fighting

on earth, and allowed them to gain the fruits of asceticism by the way of obedience to natural instincts. Nor was the Church merely able, through the Crusades, to direct the martial instincts of a feudal society, it was also able to pursue the object of its own immediate policy and to attempt the universal diffusion of Christianity, even at the edge of the sword, over the whole of the known world."⁶

A wrong policy once adopted acts and reacts down the centuries upon the affairs of men and nations. This lecture has brought out the influence of Christianity upon Islam in the seventh century and the consequent result that force had to be met by force on both sides. Moslems regarded Christians as unbelievers and therefore, in the "House of War." Christians called Moslem infidels and thus widened the breach and created hatreds, misunderstandings, and mistrusts, which have never been resolved in over a thousand years of contacts of the one religion with the other.^{6a}

All that Professor Barker says of the desire of the Crusader to gain heaven by war service, of his spread of the faith by the sword and of religion supplying

⁶ "Crusades," *Encyclopedia Britannica*—14th Ed., Vol. 6, p. 772.

^{6a} For an interesting account of the propaganda against Islam prior to the Crusades. v. D. C. Munro, "The Western attitude toward Islam during the period of the Crusades," *Speculum* VI (1931), pp. 329-343.

a method by which a knight could serve his own inclinations and the Church at the same time might with equal truth be said of Islam in its *Jihads*. Compare what is said of the Crusades with the Hanafi teaching of Islam, as given in the Hadith, "If the infidels upon receiving the call (of Islam) neither consent to it nor agree to pay capitation tax, it is then incumbent on the Moslems to call upon God for assistance and to make war upon them, because God is the assistant of those who serve Him, and the destroyer of His enemies, the infidels, and it is necessary to implore His aid upon every occasion; the Prophet, moreover, commands us so to do. And having done so the Moslems must then, with God's assistance, attack the infidels with all manner of war-like engines (as the Prophet did the people of Taif) and must also set fire to their habitations (in the same manner as the Prophet fired Baweera) and must inundate them with water and tear up their plantations, and tread down their grain because by these means they will become weakened, and their resolution will fail and their force be broken; these means are, therefore, all sanctioned by the law."⁷ So much for Islamic law. But where does this study lead us? It surely challenges the whole conception of

⁷ Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 245.

religion which sees God on the side of the big battalions. It reveals departures from primitive Christianity with the consequent disasters repeated century after century. It sets before us the issue of our own modern world. Are we building for the future upon force or upon the principle of the Cross? There is here the conflict of two opposing forces, the material and the spiritual, the law of retaliation and the law of love. Samson in his blindness prayed, "O God, that I may be avenged once more of the Philistines for my two eyes." Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

We talk of disarmament among the nations, of a better understanding, of an abiding peace, and the nations pile up arms and demand security on the basis of a country's power to retaliate. "That I may be avenged." We speak of the conflict of faiths and the failure of one religion to appreciate another and each invokes the civil and if necessary the military power to protect it and to forward its aims.

Christ said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." All men—Christians, and Moslems, Arabs and Jews, all nations and all peoples will be drawn irresistibly to Him—if He is lifted up. He was lifted up once on the Cross and the world tried to forget it. Islam denied it. Lift Him up again and at once

there will appear a new power in the world—the power of a love which gives and does not count the cost, a love which knows no hatred, which sweetens all relationships and brings men to a new experience of God.

Chapter Two

The Expansion of Islam and the Shrinkage of Christendom

IN THE first chapter we have seen how Islam arose as a desert faith, Arab in type and character; how a camel-driver became a prophet and imposed his creed, at the edge of the sword, upon pagan tribes; how warring peoples were united under one banner; how many who at first were bitterly hostile to Mohammed became his most ardent followers and how the gods of Arabia were discarded for a new faith in one God—great, supreme, merciful, and compassionate.

In 632 A.D. the Prophet, at the age of 63, died after a brief illness. The news of his death stunned the people of Medina, and Omar declared that he was but in a trance and would appear among them again. It was at this critical period, when the whole Islamic structure might have collapsed that Abu Bekr, the first Caliph, who was to become one of the greatest men in the whole history of Islam, pushed his way through the crowd into Mohammed's home to verify for himself the fact. Stooping down he

kissed the face of the dead Prophet, saying, "Dear to me as my father and mother wert thou. Sweet wert thou in life and sweet art thou in death." He then strode out into the excited throng and exclaimed, "Whoso worshippeth Mohammed let him know that Mohammed is dead; but whoso worshippeth God let him know that God liveth and dieth not." Though the people were quietened by this speech the real danger was yet to come. All the old tribal ideas came to the surface and the Medina Arabs demanded a leader from among their own people, but again Abu Bekr's commanding influence won the day, and he himself was acknowledged as the true successor of the Prophet. It is the genius of the Arab people that at each great crisis the man for the hour appeared. A turning point in the history of the world came when Abu Bekr was appointed first Caliph of Islam.

His policy, when he assumed the office of leader, was to follow as closely as possible the will of the Prophet. His attitude to the pagan world, that is, in Islamic language, the peoples who are neither Jews nor Christians, was to offer them Islam or the sword. To the tribes within Arabia itself no third choice was given. They were idolaters and they were summoned in the name of Allah to cast away their idols and to accept the new creed "There is no God but God and Mohammed is the Prophet of God." If they

refused they were put to the sword. If they accepted the new faith they were at once admitted into the Moslem brotherhood and to a share of the spoils in battle. For Arabia there could be no division. The tribes must acknowledge God and Mohammed if they were to be cemented into a unity.

The attitude of Islam towards Christians and Jews was different. The choice between Islam and the sword was not imposed in their case; they were offered Islam or the payment of a tax. The significance of this should not be lost sight of. A theocratic government in Arabia with national unification on a religious basis for its aim could not tolerate any other creed any more than can Fascism in Europe today. Arabia was to be the heart of Islam—a closed land to the unbeliever and the home of the faithful, where the faith would be preserved in its primitive purity. Why then was a larger tolerance shown towards the Jew and the Christian? Why this capitulation tax instead of the sword? The Koran supplies the answer—"Make war upon such of those to whom the Scriptures have been given, as believe not in God or in the last day. . . and who profess not the profession of truth, until they pay tribute out of their hand and be humbled."

As Moslem armies penetrated beyond Arabia the interpretation of this verse was challenged. Did it

mean that people of other religions than Christianity and Judaism, for example the Hindus of India, were to be put to the sword? Moslem leaders did not so interpret the verse. No, they argued, the words regarding the sword apply not to idolaters in general but only to idolaters of Arabia. Consequently the tax has been levied in Persia, India, and China, as well as Spain, Constantinople, and the Balkans. The astuteness of this policy from both a political and religious point of view is obvious. Arabia, with Mecca as its center, has ever been the home and heart of Islam. Here the believer lived, isolated by deserts and secluded from the contaminating influences of an unbelieving world.

Abu Bekr had to decide upon a further piece of policy. There was much consolidation to be done in Arabia, but this was not considered enough for the restless activities of the Arabs, who would be united far more by action than by precept. A war would bind them together and if successful would provide new lands for settlement and fresh wealth for those who remained in the country. Moslems of today, particularly those who carry on propaganda in Europe and America would have us believe that Islam never indulged in wars of aggression and that the wars were always defensive and waged only when the faith was in danger. This may be good propa-

ganda but it is devoid of truth. Shortly before Mohammed died he had assembled an army for the invasion of Syria. At the time of his death it was camped outside Medina, and Abu Bekr, faithful to the Prophet's wish, ordered it to march forward. At first this army was occupied in reducing to submission revolting tribes of Arabia, Moslem forces penetrating south to Hadramout and north to the Syrian borders, so that at the end of a year Arabia was once more submissive and Moslem.

The second phase of their military policy began the following year (A.D. 633) when the Arabs attacked Chaldea and the Persians. Khalid, the Arab leader, pushed his way forward into Iraq and issued a summons to the reigning Satrap "Accept the Faith and thou art safe; else pay tribute, thou and thy people; which if thou refusest thou shalt have thyself to blame. A people is already on thee, loving death even as thou lovest life." The Persian armies were driven back with great slaughter again and again. The Arab armies were moving east in a rapid march of conquest.

Here we must leave them and pick up the thread of events westward. An army of about 24,000 men had, in the meantime, been collected at Medina with the expressed objective of fighting Byzantine Rome

for the ownership of the Near East. Abu Bekr in his instructions to the leader told him to promise good government to the invaded people, to respect women and children, and to fight in the way of God. The objectives in this case were nothing less than Jerusalem and Damascus, Palestine and Syria. The Arabs with their army now increased to 40,000 are said to have faced a Byzantine force of over 100,000 under the leadership of the Emperor's own brother. The defeat of the Roman army at the Yarmuk in 634 A.D. was but the prelude to an overwhelming disaster and to conquest by the Arabs of all the land from Gaza to Damascus and beyond. For the first time in history there began an Arab Empire of world significance; ill equipped and poorly disciplined sons of the desert were ranged against the most efficient and highly organized army that the West could produce. Islam, the new reforming faith of Arabia, was challenging the intrenched position of Christianity in the Near East. At every point in the history of Moslem expansion we want to ask—Why?

Gibbon writes that "while the State was exhausted by the Persian war, and the Church was distracted by the Nestorian and Monophysite sects, Mohammed, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, erected his throne on the ruins of Christianity

and of Rome.”⁸ But neither the distractions of religious strife in the Christian Church nor the use of the sword in Islam, are in themselves sufficient answer as to why Byzantine Rome so dramatically failed. “Christianity,” says Sir William Muir, “was eaten up by strife and rancor.” Although monks and bishops moved among the troops seeking to arouse their passions by declaring that the faith was in danger, it is quite evident that many in the Imperial Army did not in the least care what happened to the Church, for the clergy had lost the confidence of the laity and were extremely unpopular. Moreover the Imperial Army was conscripted while the Arabs fought as a volunteer force. The lukewarm spirit of the Greeks, in spite of their numbers was no match for the wild and fanatical fervor of the Moslems, who saw, if they were killed, a paradise of sensual delights and if they survived, boundless spoil, captive girls, well watered lands, houses and wealth.

Gibbon’s phrase, so often quoted “The sword in one hand and the Koran in the other” is really only a half truth. The Christian forces did not collapse because of the sword of Islam, but because of their own inherent weakness. It did not require any threat of the sword for thousands of people to accept Islam;

⁸ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Ed. J. B. Bury, V. 5, p. 332.

for there can be little doubt that large numbers of Christian men embraced the new faith for what they could gain from it. They welcomed this Eastern Unitarianism as a relief from the religious burdens of the Church. Islam to many was a lay movement and appeared very much like a simplified and reformed Christianity. The solid material gains offered by the spoils of a war also helped to swell the Arab army, and thus in spite of the losses sustained in battle it increased in size continuously. The fall of Jerusalem in 637 A.D. was destined to have repercussions down the centuries in the clash of creeds, the fierce fighting of the Crusades, the Turkish misrule, and even to our day, in the feuds between Jew and Arab under a British mandate. Omar, the Caliph, imposed terms on the inhabitants which subsequently formed a model for the surrender of many cities. The treaty reads thus: "The following are the terms of capitulation which I, Omar, the servant of God, the Commander of the Faithful, grant to the people of Jerusalem. I grant them security for their lives, their possessions, and their children, their churches, their crosses and all that appertains to them in their integrity, and their lands, and to all of their religion. Their churches therein shall not be impoverished, nor destroyed, nor injured from among them; neither their endowments, nor their dignity and not

a thing of their property; neither shall the inhabitants of Jerusalem be exposed to violence in following their religion; nor shall one of them be injured."

With the fall of Damascus in 634 A.D. and the subsequent capture of Jerusalem all Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan passed under Arab rule. For the purposes of our study a consequence far more serious than military conquests was the permanent cleavage between East and West. By order of the Emperor the Greeks evacuated of its population a broad stretch of territory on the frontiers of Syria. The towns were razed to the ground, vegetation was destroyed, and a fertile tract became a wilderness, forming a permanent barrier to all intercourse between the Greek and the Arab world. Travel to and fro was forbidden and the trade route which had meant so much in the social, religious, and commercial life of the Near East was closed.

As Mohammed lay dying he is supposed to have uttered the memorable words—"In Arabia there shall be no faith but the faith of Islam,"—a dictum which has never been forgotten by his successors. Omar indeed as Caliph carried this policy further than Abu Bekr. In Central Arabia, in the Nejran province, there lived a flourishing Christian community. They had not interfered with Islam, but

they had not succumbed to its appeal. Throughout the Arab revolution they had maintained their own existence without taking sides. Omar, remembering the words of Mohammed, ordered these Christians to evacuate Arabia, and to migrate into Syria. In a similar way the Jews of Kheibar, to the north of Medina, were driven out of the country. This policy further widened the gulf between Christians and Moslems.

In the four short years following the death of Mohammed the Arabs had achieved the impossible and had laid the foundations of a new Moslem domination which brought under Arab control some of the fairest and richest cities of the Near East. In those years, too, the Greek and the Arab had separated from each other in a hatred which was to live for centuries. Arab conquests and Moslem conversions went hand in hand and the intervening years since this first expansion of Islam until now reveal an almost complete Islamization of Syria and Palestine. The language of the people, whether Moslem or Christian, is now Arabic. Islam has imposed its own language and its religion so effectively that a once Christian population has been converted in course of time into a 90% Moslem people. Only a remnant of 10% remains Christian.

After a brief period of consolidation the Arab

army moved across Sinai to the conquest of Egypt in the year 640 A.D. The Arab leader Amr saw the strategic importance of Alexandria in the Western world. Egypt was the granary of the Near East and the conquest of so rich a country would greatly strengthen the position of Islam. Again we have the incredible spectacle of rapid advance, conquest, and consolidation.

The internal conditions in Egypt at the time greatly reduced the opposition which the invaders might in other circumstances have expected to encounter. Theological controversy had separated the Greek from the Coptic Church; the Patriarch of the latter Church had been banished because he would not compromise his principles in order to serve the Emperor's ends; and the Emperor had recently reinforced his authority over the country so that the people were in a state of passive resistance to the Byzantine occupation. It was at such a juncture in the affairs of the country that the Arabs began their invasion. Egypt looked on with indifference while her fate was being decided. Her people would not raise a finger to help the Greeks, but with characteristic fatalism resigned the matter to the judgment of God.

The fate of Egypt depended at the first assault upon a marauding army of Arabs not more than 4,000

strong, but as reinforcements arrived from Arabia the occupation of the country was extended. And what has been the result? The people of Egypt were Christian when Amr and his force entered the country. Their language was Coptic and their affinities were all with the Greek rather than the Arab world. Today Egypt is predominantly Moslem. Over 90% of the people are followers of the Prophet. Their ancient Coptic language is now dead and even the Copts regard Arabic as their mother tongue. A country formerly linked to Europe has for centuries been facing towards Mecca, and a once Christian people today proudly boast of Moslem allegiance. The process of conversion to Islam was gradual but it was very effective. In the course of time Egyptian Moslems have come to be regarded as the stoutest defenders of the faith of Islam and through the subsequent founding of the Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt has become a center for Moslem culture and learning. In marked contrast to the Christian Church Islam has no priesthood. It is from first to last a lay movement and most of its educational and propaganda work is carried on voluntarily. It has not been necessary for Islam to found missionary societies because every Moslem, wherever he is, is expected to bear his personal witness to his faith.

From the point of view of religious propaganda

Egypt bristled with problems, but the Arabs kept up the pressure ceaselessly and the reaction from Byzantine misrule and the Imperial connection with the Church proved of great assistance for many Christians only too willingly embraced the Moslem faith. The mere acceptance of the creed of Mohammed would never have made the faith permanent in the lives of people. Definite teaching of the Koran was needed, and the question arose how this was to be secured. The method ultimately adopted and with conspicuous success was to found a center of religious learning in Cairo. The Azhar University fulfilled this need. The second stage was to train a large body of men as koranic teachers. They were to be literally people of one book. They could be ignorant and uneducated on many subjects, but they must be masters of the Koran. These men rapidly scattered over the length and breadth of Egypt and in fact far beyond. They were content to live on a mere pittance which they earned as village school masters. The one textbook of these schools was again the Koran. Boys at an early stage were initiated into the art of praying and they speedily memorized considerable portions of the Koran. Thus a simple but effective form of intensive training was given. The process has gone on for hundreds of years and whatever criticism we may make of the village *kuttab*, or school,

and judged by Western standards they do not comply with a single canon of education, they have proved of immense importance to Islam. They have not only helped to keep the village folk loyal to their faith, which Christian teachers failed to do, but they have won converts from Christianity in every generation since the Arab invasion.

The position in Egypt today affords a good illustration of the Moslem method of propaganda. In every year during the past decade from 500 to 1000 Christians have become Moslems. This cannot be said to be due to persecution or the sword. It is largely due to the lay voluntary witness of Moslems to their faith. It is greatly helped by the decadent condition of the Coptic Church. If the Coptic Church had instituted a simple *kuttab* system in which the Bible well-taught was the principal subject no doubt the results would have been very different. The lesson to be learnt from the Moslem method of holding converts, training them, and making them witnesses is of first-rate importance to the Christian missionary enterprise. In the conflict with Islam a contributory cause of the failure of Christianity was the priestcraft of the Church, the unpopularity of the clergy, and the absence of any adequate lay expression in the religious life of the people. Alternatively Islam found a growing strength as it ex-

panded in its lay character. It was a religion of the people, its religious services were conducted by laymen and its mosques were under lay control.

To continue the story of Moslem invasion, an army of 20,000 Arabs moved southward in 643 A.D. into the Sudan. The Christian kingdom of Nubia was attacked and subdued with the result that traveling from Egypt south today we find a solid block of Moslems for 1000 miles. Ten years later a treaty was drawn up by the Moslem General, which reads as follows:—

“In the name of God . . . This is a treaty granted by the Amir Abdullah Ibn Saoud to the chief of the Nubians and to all the people of his dominions, a treaty binding on all great and small among them, from the frontier of Assouan to the frontier of Alwa. Abdullah ordains security and peace between them and the Moslems. Ye Nubians, ye shall dwell in safety under the safeguard of God and His apostle Mohammed, the Prophet whom God bless and save. Ye shall protect Moslems or their allies who come into your land. . . . Ye shall put no obstacle in the way of a Moslem, but render him aid until he quit your territory. Ye shall take care of the mosque which the Moslems have built in the outskirts of your city and hinder none from praying there. Ye shall clean it, light it, and honor it. Every year ye shall pay

360 head of slaves to the leader of the Moslems of the middle class of slaves of your country, without bodily defects, males and females, but no old men, nor old women, nor children." This treaty continued in force for six hundred years and led ultimately to the entire community becoming Moslem.

A point of great importance emerges from the extracts quoted above and that is the special reference in the treaty to the mosque. Evidently one of the first things done by the invading army was to erect a mosque and to call to prayer. How strange this call to prayer must have sounded in Nubia in the seventh century where the Church bell was the customary summons to worship. That solitary mosque in its lonely witness became the symbol of a new force which was destined to change the religion of the entire population from Christianity to Islam. The importance attached to the village school in Egypt has already been referred to, but the mosque invariably preceded the school and wherever a group of Moslems settled, their first duty was to erect a place of worship. The strength of Islam has not been the sword or army nearly so much as the mosque and school. Again we ask, Why this defection from Christianity? Nubia was evangelized from Egypt and therefore had its links with the Coptic Church. As Christianity took root in the country there had been

introduced liturgies and religious writings for use in church worship. How far the Church ever used the vernacular as a medium of Christian worship and instruction is doubtful. I know of no evidence to show that anywhere in the Sudan the Church ever attempted to translate the services from Greek and Coptic into the language of the country. Students of anthropology recognize today that a man worships in his mother tongue and to ask him to worship in a foreign language is to introduce an artificiality which will make his worship more a matter of the head than the heart.

Let us move on again in the wake of this Arab force, and this time to North Africa.

In 647 A.D. the first attempt was made to conquer North Africa, but owing to dissension in Egypt the invasion had to be abandoned and nothing further was done for twenty years. When at length the Arab army moved westward it encountered fierce opposition, but gradually the invaders captured all the territory from the borders of Egypt to the Atlantic Ocean.

The story of the destruction of the Christian Church has often been told, but I wonder how far we realize the magnitude of this disaster. The Church that could boast of Tertullian, the great apologist, Cyprian, organizer and administrator, Augustine,

theologian and saint, crumbled before the onslaught of Islam.

Mr. Cooksey, in his survey of North Africa, says "They (the Moslems) swept away a Church, which for profound piety, eminent and learned leadership working through a solid church organization, had been without a peer in Christendom from the second century to the death of Augustine in the early fifth."

It was of this Church that Tertullian spoke when he said "We grow up in great numbers, as often as we are cut down by you. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. We are of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you—cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies; your very camps and companies, palace, senate, forum; we leave you your temple only."

A Church of many martyrs—yet it died out! A Church of vast influence. It is reputed to have had 579 different dioceses, each presided over by its own Bishop, and yet its organization and numerical strength did not save it. It is possible to travel through Tripoli, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco to-day without finding a living trace of this once historic Church. It is a memory kept alive by the ruins of cathedrals. The Christian symbols on stone columns and buildings are but a pathetic survival of a

lost opportunity, of an extinct Christian civilization. Again we ask—Why?

In our study of the clash between Islam and Christianity in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, we were dealing with the vicissitudes which overtook the Greek and Coptic branches of the Christian Church. Now in North Africa for the first time we see Islam facing the Latin Church. The Churches in North Africa were modelled on Roman civilization and imperialism and were made use of by the authorities as an instrument for Latinizing the country, so that an Empire program was fostered by ecclesiastical machinery. The Berber tribes were ever restive of Imperial Rome, and a religion which at times became the tool of military aggression ultimately lost its hold on the people. Many in North Africa welcomed the Moslem army because it promised relief from Roman domination. Moreover, the Roman character of liturgical worship was stamped upon North Africa through the Latin language, for services were rendered in Latin, the Scriptures were taught in Latin with the result that Christianity always had a foreign color. It is doubtful indeed whether the Scriptures were ever translated into any of the North African vernaculars.

Did the Church of North Africa become really indigenous? It may be argued that a period of over 400 years was sufficiently long to guarantee the "native"

character of the Church, but this is not necessarily so because throughout the same period the whole of North Africa was a part of the Roman Empire and the heads of the Church were Europeans, not Africans. The Christian body, too, was weakened by schism and religious strife. It was a house divided against itself and in its hour of peril failed.

From North Africa the story must be carried across the Straits of Gibraltar and into Europe. By the end of the first century of Islamic history the whole of Spain had been subjugated and a Moslem army sought to penetrate into France. In 846 even Rome was partially sacked by Moslems, and Islam occupied southern Italy. At the same time another army was moving eastward from Arabia and occupying Persia, Bokhara, and Samarkand, and many a great city of the Eastern world fell under Moslem sway. Meanwhile a third army had been pushing forward across Asia Minor and had actually reached the gates of Constantinople before the close of the seventh century.

Space will not permit of any detailed account of the Turkish phase of Moslem expansion. The capture of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. by a Turkish army when the great Cathedral Church of Santa Sophia was converted into a Mohammedan mosque, once more brought Islam to the door of Europe.

For the next two centuries Europe was in deadly fear of Islam. In the churches special services of intercession were held daily to pray for protection from the Turk. A reflection of this period is to be seen in the Anglican Church Prayer Book. In the collect for Good Friday three ancient prayers are combined, and we pray for "Jews, Turks, Infidels, and heretics."

The Balkan States were successively conquered until in 1673 a Moslem army was hammering at the gates of Vienna. The fate of Europe hung in the balance, and with the defeat of the Turkish forces there came immediate relief from the strain and anxiety. As time went on it was apparent that this advance as far as Vienna was the highwater mark of Moslem expansion. From this time onward Islam declined and its empire shrank.

In our endeavor to understand why Islam succeeded we must seek for the causes both in Islam and in Christianity.

In Islam the causes were many. First among them we may place the simplicity of its creed: "There is no God but God and Mohammed is the prophet of God." This Gibbon describes as "compounded of an eternal truth and a necessary fiction." Next perhaps may be put the easy morals of Islam which were doubtless responsible for many conversions. Under Islam polygamy is sanctioned and divorce is made

very easy, while the Christian Church has always adopted a stern monogamy policy. The Arab has no race complex. He intermarries freely with women of other races, be they black or white. But while a Moslem may marry a woman of any other religion or no religion at all no Moslem woman is ever allowed under Islamic law to marry a non-Moslem. Whatever the religion of the mother all children of a Moslem father must be brought up as Moslems.

The law of apostacy has also been a stabilizing element in Islamic conversions. While it was easy for a man to become a Moslem once he had adopted the faith no return to Christianity was possible. The mere repetition of the creed of Islam made a man a Moslem for life; if after that he changed his religion he was liable to the death penalty under this very rigid law of apostacy. The elements of compulsion and fear thus entered into the question from the moment the short confession of faith had been repeated. Further factors in the success of Islam were the Moslem zeal and enthusiasm for their cause, the undoubted sincerity of the early leaders, and the fact that Islam gave its approval to war and throve on the policy that might was right.

These reasons help us to see why in one of the swarming periods in Arabian history these sons of the desert swept all before them. They do not how-

ever in the least explain why Islam was able to consolidate its position after each fresh conquest and to win converts long after wars had ceased.

Mohammedanism is often charged with being static, unprogressive, and bound by a conventional orthodoxy, but if this were so why is it that it has not only imposed its creed on millions of Christians, but has made their descendants among the most loyal followers of Mohammed? The fact is that unless Islam had shown a remarkable power of adaptability in the different countries it occupied it could never have assimilated so much non-Arab culture. When every allowance has been made for the *Jihad*, or for the lucrative gains of conquest, or for the fanatical strength of Arab tribesmen, there still remains the problem of how Islam contrived to retain its gains and to win the whole-hearted allegiance of many millions of people.

On the Christian side there were, as we have already seen, a variety of causes for the failure of the Church to hold its members and to maintain its existence. In addition to the reasons already given mention should be made of the effects upon the Church of the conversion of Constantine. During the first three centuries of the Christian era it cost a man something to confess Christ in baptism. At times to be a Christian even meant the imminent danger of

death. In that period the Church grew stronger and stronger, but as we have already seen when the Emperor Constantine became the protector and patron of the Church Christianity became suddenly popular and an arm of the State. From this point of view the conversion of Constantine was a calamity to the Church, for from that time onward it was recognized as the popular thing to become a Christian.

Methods of Islamic conversion are open to grave criticism, but it should be remembered that the Moslems were only copying the Greek Church and Byzantine Rome when they exercised every form of pressure to increase the number of their followers. The Emperor Justinian, in a code of law compiled less than a century before the time of Mohammed, declared that "heathens were to be baptized if they wished to enjoy the common rights of citizens. The law was so administered that 70,000 so-called converts were added to the Christian Church in Asia Minor."⁹

The ease with which large numbers of people dropped their pagan faith and sought Christian baptism was but the precursor of a similar movement later on when Islam was in the ascendant and millions of Christians who were only so in name, followed the line of least resistance and adopted the Moslem faith. Mass conversions to Christianity were

⁹ L. E. Browne, *The Eclipse of Christianity*, p. 1.

a source of great weakness to the Church, for a nominal faith exposed it to every assault from outside. The noteworthy thing, however, is that what was a source of weakness to Christianity has proved a solid strength to Islam. Mass conversions there were along the line of march of every Moslem army, east and west, but however nominal was the faith of these converts they were ultimately built into the fabric of the Islamic system and became in time as ardent followers of the Prophet as the Arabs themselves.

In addition to the weakness of the Church through mass conversion mention must be made of the theology then particularly emphasized. It is not easy to speak of a matter of so controversial a character, but this study would be incomplete without it. The conception of human life that was represented by the monastic system divorced religion from the claims of human nature. Asceticism spread very rapidly throughout the Eastern Church and was regarded by the ecclesiastical leaders as a quality of life superior to ordinary human relationships. Mr. Browne, in his book, *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*, says, "In Edessa at the beginning of the fourth century only celibates were allowed to be baptized and though the practice was soon abandoned the preference for the celibate life was shown in the regulations about marriage of the clergy."

The common people failed in many cases to find in the Christian faith a religion that had a practical application for them. They drifted into superstitions which in turn further weakened the Christian witness. For example the veneration of pictures or images of Christ tended to give people a wrong idea of the Incarnation. "The claim that the use of images of Christ is a logical result of a belief in the Incarnation is not true for the image is only material. We must look to see the Incarnate Christ shown forth not in some merely material symbol, but in human life, in the life of regenerate humanity, i.e., of Christians in whom Christ is born."¹⁰

The monastic system was really a source of weakness and there can be no doubt that this phase of Church life was a serious stumbling block to Moslems who gloried in the fullest expression of human instincts. One of their favourite sayings was "There is no monkhood in Islam." Ritual and ceremony in the Christian Church took the place of personal conversion, the worship of pictures supplanted that spiritual experience by which a Christian community can alone grow strong. There followed a consequent loss of power to transform lives. Dr. Illingworth in his *Reason and Revelation* says, "The unique characteristic of nascent Christianity was its power. Power is

¹⁰ *The Eclipse of Christianity*, p. 76.

the word harped upon throughout the New Testament, and the Father's power to translate ideals into action and that not only in the hearts of the refined few, but of the vulgar many, weak women, ignorant children, uncultivated slaves. Power to convert the grossest of sinners into miracles of sanctity, and martyrs for their faith. It was this power which stirred society to its depths and revolutionized the world. And the same creative power has continued through the ages and is at work as a fact of experience in the world today."

This picture of living Christianity stands out in striking contrast to the effeminate court religion of Constantinople and the laxity of morals among the rank and file of church members of that time.

Christianity differs from other religions because it is not merely a system of theology but rather a life to be lived, a life that is centered in the living Christ and that is lived in complete loyalty and obedience to Him as Saviour and Lord. In every age when a Church loses its converting power and ceases to propagate its faith it loses in vitality and ultimately becomes a prey to other influences and cults. Because Christianity is a life to be lived it ceases to influence the world when it loses its faith in Christ's power literally to change human nature. The outward forms may live on, worship may be maintained and

little happen in the dull routine of ecclesiastical life until some such movement as Islam breaks in upon its secluded religious life and sweeps it on one side.

When the maiden refused to burn incense to the goddess of Rome she was accused of throwing her life away for a handful of dust, but without that sacrifice which placed loyalty to Christ supreme and above all other loyalties Christianity would never have survived. In the Moslem invasion the same challenge met the Church but found it compliant and compromising. In this spirit of compromise many bowed to the storm and hoped for a better day which never came. When the Church lost its message and its witness its vitality was sapped and decay set in which prepared the way for the catastrophe which overtook it.

As we reflect upon this period of Church history and then look at the remnants of a once virile and witnessing Church in the Near East today we are constrained to ask whether this is part of a process in the building of the Kingdom of God, or whether the candle stick has been removed. We do not as yet see the whole picture. God is working out His purpose and He can only fulfil His plan as His servants maintain those principles and ideals which lie deeply embedded in the Person and character of our Lord. Unfaithfulness may delay the plan for centuries but

it cannot frustrate permanently the purpose of God. Islam, by its sweeping military invasion and its dogmatic creed, has played a significant part in world history, but it does not represent that moral and spiritual force through which alone the Kingdom of God can come. As it hardened it ceased to represent a living faith and its orthodoxy more and more closed the minds of its followers to all investigation of truth. The conservative Moslem, self-satisfied and self-sufficient, lives in the past. His boast is a faded glory and his creed an untenable acceptance of an infallible book.

If Christianity failed in the face of Islam, Islam in turn is failing in the face of a modern secularism which is making devastating inroads into the faith as understood by the Prophet.

Chapter Three

The Contribution of Christianity to Islamic Thought and Life

WE HAVE considered the contributions of other faiths towards the making of Islam and have seen something of the effect of Moslem expansion upon the Christian Church. Our next step is to approach that puzzling problem of Islam—its amazing growth, its religious fervor and its proselytizing zeal. If we regard Islam as an Arab faith pure and simple we do not account for its continuance in a wholly non-Arab environment. If we look upon its creed merely as a coldly orthodox statement of the unity of God we have still to explain the warmth of the mysticism which early developed in so remarkable a way in its fold. If we argue that military conquests and enforced conversions compelled people to accept Islam we are faced with the question why Christians should have been willing to subscribe to an alien faith when they were offered the alternative of paying a tax. Part of the answer to these and other similar enquiries undoubtedly lies in the fact that although it had an Arab exterior and a strong Semitic background, Is-

lam did, from the beginning, contain elements from other faiths which gave it points of contact with a non-Arab world.

Mohammed believed that his visions were the direct revelation of God to him. While today we account for this on psychological rather than miraculous ground the fact remains, as Harrison has put it, that in these visions "was born a religious system which was the best product of Mohammed's mind and much more than that—the crystallization of the mind of a race. It is no detraction to say that the essence of Mohammed's greatness was that he expressed the best and most powerful thought of the Arab race. It was because his thinking and feeling were the thinking and feeling of a great race that he stands out as one of the great men of the world."¹¹ This is the Arab aspect of the case and as far as it goes it is true, but it is only a partial explanation and our inquiry leads us to investigate further the Christian and other elements in Islam.

Islam was a syncretistic system which sought to draw upon what had gone before and to present one religion to the world as the due successor of other faiths, mainly the Jewish and the Christian. As long as we allow the military prowess of Islamic armies and the excited and heated statements of warriors to

¹¹ Paul Harrison, *The Arab at Home*, p. 188.

govern our thinking about Mohammedanism we lose the real inwardness of the religion. "It is plain that the political triumphs of Islam did not mean the extermination of Christianity or of its adherents who continued to live side by side with the Arabs. It would appear, too, that the relations of Christians and Moslems, the conquered and the conquerors, were friendly enough on the whole, in the years immediately succeeding the conquest, in most of the countries concerned.¹² The Moslem leaders quickly recognized that Christians were a real asset to them in the administration of their empire. Christians had a better education on the whole than the Arabs. They were well versed in the science and the arts of their day and consequently in many conquered areas the civil administration was largely in Christian hands. This was notably true of Egypt, where the Copts took a considerable share in the government of the country. "Under the Unmayad caliphs, Syrian Christians frequently held high offices at Court and in the reign of Mu'awiya, the Governor of Medina employed Christians from Ayla to police the sacred city. The father of the Christian theologian, John of Damascus, was counsellor to the Caliph Abd-al-Malik (A.D. 685-705) and John himself held a similar official position

¹² M. Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism*, p. 112.

till he withdrew to a life of seclusion in the monastery of Saba."¹³

Then, too, the doctors of the Moslem world were Christians. Not only were they encouraged in their practice of medicine by their rulers, but for centuries the medical profession was almost entirely in Christian hands. In the realm of architecture the Christian contribution was welcomed at an early period. Some of these Christian builders became Moslems, but the Islamic architecture for which they were responsible and which was to become so famous was not Arab at all. In the building of their great mosques Moslems employed Syrians, or Egyptians, or Spaniards, or men of other nationalities and the faith they professed was accidental, but either they or their fathers were Christian and Islam is therefore indebted to non-Arab peoples for their beautiful and stately buildings. "The conquerors found ready to hand, skilled builders in every one of the subject provinces, and a great number of buildings which they, like the Copts and the Visigothic Christians before them, freely used as stone quarries. . . . There is no need to dispute the view commonly and justifiably held that the first Arab conquerors had no architectural skill or taste. . . . Even when they forsook fighting to take up the task of government, they inevitably

¹³ M. Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism*, p. 113.

relied for technical skill in the building arts on craftsmen they found on the spot or on craftsmen brought from one conquered country to another."¹⁴

Similarly in letters and education the Arabs found a new world opening up to them and rulers became pupils as they came into touch with Christian thinkers of Alexandria, Baghdad, and Damascus. The intellectual life of the Near and Middle East centered in the Church, which in turn had been influenced by Hellenism. Moslem leaders therefore acquired their first taste for philosophy, physics, astronomy, and other branches of learning from Christian scholars. Thus the early Christian elements in Islam were strengthened and an increasing enrichment given to Moslem life through contact with Christian thought. One of the earliest contributions of Christianity to Islam was the translation of Greek, Latin, and Syriac works of science into Arabic, and it was through the medium of these translations that the Abbaside caliphs first studied Greek philosophy. Another development naturally followed. Moslems who were learning the value of education turned to Christian tutors for their children, and in this way increasing influence was gained, not so much for the Christian faith as such, as for the civilization and culture for which the Christian faith stood. But important as were these

¹⁴ *The Legacy of Islam*, pp. 156-7, edited by Sir T. Arnold.

contacts between Moslems and Christians perhaps the most striking contribution of all was the leavening influence of the Christian ethic upon Islamic religious ideas.

We have already seen something of the influence of Judaism upon the theology of Mohammed. His conception of God was largely molded by the Jews he met on his journeys. This aspect of the Prophet's teaching concerning God can best be illustrated by quotations from the Koran.

"He is God, One God, The Eternal, There is none equal to Him." (Koran, chapter 113.)

"With Him are the keys of the hidden things; none knoweth them but He; and He knoweth whatsoever is on the land and in the sea and there falleth not a leaf but He knoweth it, nor a grain in the dark part of the earth, nor a moist thing nor a dry thing, but it is noted in a distinct writing." (Chap. 6, 59-64.)

"He is supreme over His servants."

"This is God your Lord. There is no God but He, the Creator of everything, therefore worship ye Him; and He is guardian over everything." (Chap. 6, 100-103.)

Mohammed had nothing of pantheism in his own theology. He had all the Arab's fatalism and this colored his picture of the Deity, but although he re-

garded God as apart from and above the world yet he also visualized Him as merciful, compassionate, and loving, tolerant to those who served Him, but remorseless in His judgment upon the disobedient. The ninety-nine names for God include the King, the Great, the Creator, Destroyer, Ruler, and the Reckoner; other names are the Holy, the Peace, the Forgiver, the Provider, the Loving, ending at last with the ninety-ninth name—the Patient. The Traditions in their teaching about God vary widely but the truth is that while Mohammed conceived of God in His glorious unity as Supreme and Almighty, he never lost sight of the kindlier traits of human character which he attributed to Him.

The ninety-nine names for God are remembered devotionally by most Moslems by the use of the rosary which is divided into three sections with a long-shaped bead at the end. Islamic teachers have argued for centuries over the significance of this additional hundredth bead, and there is more than one explanation of its significance. But perhaps the truest interpretation is that which is given by the mystics of Islam, who say that while every bead of the chain represents one of God's attributes, the long bead does not stand for any particular attribute but is meant to denote the essential essence of God Himself and

is therefore the unknown name of God, the one great name which possesses all the divine attributes.

Popular ideas of God at the time we are now considering were very fluid, so that when Islam broke through into the heart of the Christian world certain aspects of Christian dogma were instantly rejected but others were seen to be very similar to corresponding tenets in Islam. "It is evident that Islam, during the first centuries of its existence, at a time when its theological doctrines were being formulated, and what is more important for our purpose, at a time when mystical doctrines were developing, found itself almost everywhere in a Christian environment, in close contact with Christian forms of worship and Christian culture."¹⁵ The Islamic system was but the framework, and the real spirit that has proved the strength of Islam down the centuries has been neither its military and political power nor the rectitude of its creed, but the mystic quest for God and the experience of God to which many attained. This experience among followers of Islam is, in many of its truest aspects, Christian, and in it they share much that is common to all religions in which mystics have sincerely sought to find God as Reality.

Dean Inge describes mysticism as meaning "an immediate communion, real or supposed, between the

¹⁵ M. Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism*, pp. 123-4.

human soul and the soul of the world, or the Divine Spirit. The hypothesis on which it rests is that there is a real affinity between the individual soul and the great immanent spirit."¹⁶ A mystic is a religious realist. He is one for whom God is a reality in life and to whom religion gives the whole meaning of life. The mystic by his contemplation finds his life moved by a mysterious attraction to God. Augustine said: "Thou has made us for Thyself and our hearts can find no rest except in Thee." This thought finds an echo among mystics of all faiths, that are in any sense alive. The mystic is at war with the self-life, with the material and secular domination of life and with the world's standard of values. He therefore aims at a first-hand experience of God that comes to him through love. It is to the Moslem aspect of this subject that we now turn.

Many who embraced Islam in the early days had a strong Christian background, and into the system of Islam they poured all their own religious experiences with the result that Islam has produced some great mystics. There is something inherent in man which longs for God, which creates a passion for Him, and which in some natures proves to be a driving force of their lives, continually impelling them onward in their quest for God.

¹⁶ *Outspoken Essays*, p. 234.

In Islam "mysticism was the reaction from the burden of a dry monotheism, of a rigid law and a stiffened ritual. The orthodoxy of the faithful did not meet the needs of the more imaginative minds of some of the Eastern races, and Sufiism, supplying this want, found a home amongst them."¹⁷

The mystics of Islam have long been associated with the Sufi sect, but they are by no means confined to that body, as elements of mysticism appear in the Koran and in the earliest days of the expansion of Islam before the Sufi movement became a recognized cult. It is also true to say that the numerous dervish orders in Mohammedanism have a great deal of real mysticism as their basis. Mystical elements have appeared, too, in Babism and Bahaism.

Much has been written as to the actual sources of Mohammed's own personal mysticism. The conception of God as one, came to the Prophet mainly from Judaism, but the mystical elements in the development of this doctrine are undoubtedly of Christian origin, and we shall not understand the problem before us until we investigate the Christian influences in the rise of the mystical tendency in orthodox early Islam.

Abu Bekr once asked the Prophet to give him a prayer for his own private use, and he gave him the

¹⁷ Sell, *Studies in Islam*, p. 3.

following: "O God, I have wronged my own soul with grievous sins and Thou alone dost forgive sins, forgive me with Thy forgiveness, have compassion on me, for in truth Thou art the Forgiving and the Merciful."

This note of penitence lies at the root of most that is truly mystical in Islam. Mohammed ordered his followers to keep the fast of Ramadan as a proof of sincere repentance, and as an aid to discipline he himself had periods of severe introspection, when he would retire from Mecca to a cave for meditation. In this he was copying the example of monks and hermits he must have met on his journeys with the camel caravans. He was intimately acquainted with many Christian monks and he instituted the fast of Ramadan in imitation of the Christian practice of fasting in Lent. It is important to note, however, that it is only in the Meccan period of the Prophet's life that we find the real teaching on asceticism. After his flight from Mecca, when more prosperous days came and Moslems sought to meet their needs by raiding surrounding tribes, there came a distinct fall in the spiritual level of the Prophet's utterances and in the idealism of his message. With the growth of temporal power and the increasing wealth of the Moslem community at Medina this decline in moral and spiritual vitality is most noticeable.

It was at a later period, when the practice of asceticism came to be recognized in Islam, that attempts were made to attribute this form of discipline to Mohammed. We may rely upon the traditions of the Meccan period in regard to the Prophet's habits of asceticism in those days, but the traditions of later times are not necessarily accurate as a picture of the Prophet's life.

Another profitable line of investigation in this subject is a study of the theological words in the Koran. Many of these are not Arabic in their origin at all, but Aramaic. The word "rahman"—"the merciful"—is one of the most common in all Islamic literature, including the Koran, as a name for God, but it came into Islam through the Nestorian teachers of Syria, and "Rahman," as a title for God, was used by all the Christian Churches of the Yemen in South Arabia in pre-Islamic days.¹⁸

Similarly the word "mumineen" for "believers" came to be used by Mohammed because he had heard it among Christians in reference to the Christian believer. Many other such words can be quoted, such as "salat"—for "prayer," "subhan"—for "praise," and others which are not found in pre-Koranic writings but which were commonly used by Christians in wor-

¹⁸ For a study of this subject see Dr. M. Smith's *Studies in Early Mysticism*, p. 136.

ship and have been traced to Aramaic sources. The points to note in all this are that in the days of the Prophet the language of worship in Islam was largely borrowed from the Christian Church, and that there is little connection between the pagan Arab thought and the Moslem Arab's religious vocabulary. It is safe, therefore, to deduce that for theological terms Moslems were more indebted to Christianity than to any other source. Then there is Mohammed's injunction to his followers to pray five times a day. Tradition ascribes this to a divine revelation, when God ordered the Prophet to establish these periods of daily prayer, but it is more probable that Mohammed adopted this rule in imitation of the ordered life of the monks, who had fixed times in the day for the saying of their offices. Perhaps we do not attach enough importance to the influence of monks and monasteries on the thought-life of the Prophet. There seems to be no doubt that he had close and intimate touch with these Christian centres of religious life and that they have left their mark upon Islam for all time.

Mohammed came to the conviction that God really does answer prayer, and there is much in the Koran about its efficacy. For this he was indebted to the New Testament teaching on this subject, and a similar remark would doubtless be true of almsgiving.

The common practice at the monastery to give alms, to feed the poor, and to help the needy must have appealed to Mohammed as new and strange if only because the help was rendered without regard to creed or tribe. Hitherto tribal loyalties had encouraged one member to help another within his own tribe, but there was nothing in pagan Arabia that enabled members of one tribe to help another.

Mohammed undoubtedly saw something of value in the unselfishness of religious service in the building up of his new system and in the unification of Arabia. Islam became the super tribe, and almsgiving and help for all within the House of Islam became a law of the religion. The Koran again and again stresses the idea that men must not live merely for this world alone, that they must not store up treasures on this earth where moth and rust corrupt, but that they must lay up their treasures in heaven. Such elements in Islam as are other-worldly in character are certainly of Christian origin. In this connection Dr. Smith says: "When we come to consider the origin of these mystical doctrines found in orthodox Islam it seems evident that they must to a considerable extent be derived from similar doctrines in Christianity, where, as we have seen in previous chapters, mysticism had early taken root and had reached a considerable development at the begin-

ning of the Islamic era, especially in those Eastern Churches with which Mohammed and his immediate successors were brought into such close contact."¹⁹

It is for these reasons that we find in this clear-cut creed of Islam, with its hard and fast system, many elements of mysticism. These can be traced to the Koran itself. For example, we read: "Everything is perishing except the face of Allah" (Koran, Chap. 28, 58). By the "face" of Allah the mystic naturally understands the reality of Allah. Again we read: "Wherever we turn there is the face of Allah" (Chap. 2, 109). At a very early date an allegorical interpretation was placed upon most of the verses of the Koran. In the midst of wars and plunder, political expansion, and military victories, a body of Moslems was growing who sought for the true object of life, not in the things which are temporal and visible, but in a life completely harmonized with the will of God. There was a close affinity between Syrian Christians who were students of philosophy and these Moslem seekers after God.

Thus it came about that when this Arab faith was suddenly projected into a non-Arab world the Christians of the Near East quickly discovered so many points of contact; so much in Islamic phraseology which was familiar and expressions so similar to those

¹⁹ *Studies in Early Mysticism*, p. 148.

used in Christian worship that a bridge between the two faiths was easily built, and the mystical elements in Islam found a permanent place in its theology and practice.

During the first hundred years of Moslem history there was certainly a rapid deterioration in the moral standards of Moslem leaders. The process we have already noted in the case of the prophet, when he emerged from the poverty of Mecca to the wealth of Medina, is still more apparent in the case of the Islamic leaders when their overlordship had expanded so as to include Damascus, Jerusalem, and Egypt. Wealth and power suddenly came to them, and with temptations like those which befall most other people in similar circumstances, the Moslem conquerors plunged into material pleasures of luxury and gaiety that were totally alien to their simple-hearted fathers of a previous generation. It was as a reaction to this growing materialism that asceticism in Islam developed. In many ways it was a protest against the worldliness of the times. More spiritually-minded men were sick at heart with what they saw going on around them, and they practiced a greater austerity in their religion, much stricter fasting and more attention to prayer than they might otherwise have done. Some gave up the eating of meat altogether; some took vows of celibacy, and those who wished to distinguish

themselves from the ordinary Moslem believer began to wear a white woollen costume similar to that worn by Christian monks. It was probably the wearing of this wool that gave the name of Sufi to these mystics of Islam, for the Arabic word "souf" means "wool."

The origin of the word "Sufi" has long been debated. Some have derived it from the Arabic word "safu" (purity) and others from the Greek "sophos" (wisdom). Others again have traced it to the name of a tribe which in pre-Islamic days separated themselves from all worldly pursuits for the service of the temple at Mecca. The simple derivation just given is, however, probably the correct one. There are many similar instances in history of names given to people from some characteristic either in their dress or in the practice of their faith. This was notably so in the case of the Methodists, who acquired their now honored title originally as a term of reproach by their opponents. Whatever be the real origin, the simpler explanation is probably nearest to the truth, and we have before us the picture, in a dissolute age of declining Islamic morals, of a body of men, spiritual in aim and purpose, self-denying in life, and pure in character, seeking God with their whole hearts, wearing a distinctive dress and becoming marked as the mystics of the faith.

There can be no doubt but that these spiritual

movements inside Islam have been its real strength, keeping alive in the hearts of men a sincere desire for God. The quest to find God in experience has been a genuine one, and the Sufis have repeatedly struck the notes of unselfish love and devotion. Of further significance is the fact that in those early days the whole relationship between Christians and Moslems was embittered by constant war; hatreds were deep and feeling ran high. Yet in those very days there were in each of the two religions groups of people who never could base their religion on anything material and who believed that the use of force and temporal power as an instrument for the expansion of religion was totally wrong. They thus paved the way for an understanding between followers of the two faiths; they kept open the doors of approach from one to the other; they shared experiences together; and it is true today as it was then that the only real line of approach from Christianity to Islam is this one of a common quest for God and the sharing of the Christian experiences, found in Christ, with Moslems the world over.

Another Christian idea which came out of the Moslem's contacts with the Christian monasteries was that of the necessity for works of supererogation. Moslem mystics soon developed the idea that they must

do more than what is written in the Koran and the Shariat.

I well remember when I was a missionary in Egypt meeting a dervish leader of the Sufi type, who travelled from day to day on pastoral visits to members of his order. Frequently on my evangelistic tours I came across this man, and when I asked him why he spent so much time and energy in this work of visitation he smiled and said that he was seeking to stir up the faithful to greater zeal. He explained that the ordinary rules of Islam were not enough, that something more was needed. What he really meant was that he was seeking to interpret the laws of his religion in terms of spirit, life, and experience, rather than in the routine liturgies of mosque worship. This man was typical of many others, and with him prayer meant something more than the repetition of set forms. He was most meticulous in saying the prayer prescribed for worship in the mosque and he never missed his prayers five times a day, but he would produce from the folds of his long robes little books of collects, special prayers for use on different occasions, and to these he would add the habit of quiet meditation and concentration upon the thought of God. He was typical of an earlier Islamic mysticism, for the early Sufis laid down rules for the preparation of the soul in prayer. An example from one of the mys-

tic writers may be quoted: "Before the time of prayer comes," he writes, "the servant must be in a state of meditation and recollection, free from wandering thoughts and considerations, and the remembrance of aught save God alone. Those who enter thus upon prayer from the heart, intent only upon God, will proceed from prayer to prayer in that same state of recollection, and will remain therein long after they have ceased to pray."²⁰

One of the earliest of Moslem mystics once said that Sufism was "the apprehension of divine realities and the renunciation of human possessions." This savors very much of New Testament teaching, and, indeed, a good deal in the writings of these men resembles the epistles of St. Paul and St. John and the words of our Lord. For example, one Moslem has said: "The Sufi is one whose heart is pure towards God." Our Lord said: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." In this the Sufis, as well as the great Christian leaders, have placed particular emphasis upon the necessity of freedom from the defilement of the flesh, the conquest of self and selfish desires. We might compare the following Sufi saying with the first Epistle of St. John (2, 15): "Sufism is enmity to the world and love to the Lord."

Again might we not compare St. Paul's message

²⁰ Al Sarraj, *Studies in Early Mysticism*, p. 162.

to the Galatians (2, 20): "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me"—with the Moslem saying: "Sufism means that God makes thee to die to thyself and makes thee live in Him." There are scores of similar parallels between the writings of Moslem and Christian mystics. This is seen notably in the emphasis placed by mystics upon the law of God. One Sufi was certainly voicing the opinion of his sect when he tells us that "satisfaction is the contemplation by the heart of the eternal will of God for His servant, for His will for him is best."

I call to mind another incident of my missionary period in Egypt. A Moslem evangelist came to the town in which I lived and preached in the mosque day after day upon the spiritual implications of the Moslem faith. I was interested in what he was doing because of the similarity in plan and purpose with the evangelistic missions so frequently held in Christian churches. After the mission was over I asked one who had followed the movement throughout and upon whom I could depend for an honest opinion of the results of this Moslem's preaching. He described the change in the lives of Moslem drunkards who had become sober, and evil men who had put away their sins. The descriptions he gave corresponded very closely to what in Christianity would

be described as conversions, and the accounts of such conversions among mystics have been placed on record. I give one of them as an illustration.

Ibrahim, the son of Adham, was born in the eighth century of royal blood, his father being a king in Khurasan. He tells how, when out hunting, he heard a heavenly voice calling him from the pursuit of pleasure to the service of God. As in the case of Raymond Lull the vision appeared to him three times. At first he hesitated, but as the vision came again he slipped from his horse and bowed on the ground before God in an act of surrender to Him, after which he walked across to a shepherd near by and exchanged his beautiful steed for the shepherd's woollen garment, and without any means of support and in an act of complete renunciation of home, palace, and worldly pursuits, he set out on pilgrimage to Mecca.

There is something in this story that is arresting to all students of religion, and no Christian can deny the sincerity of purpose, the earnestness in the quest, and the zeal of pursuit so marked in the lives of many of the Sufis, whose one objective was, by a complete acceptance of the will of God, to find a spiritual experience that would transcend all the experience of life. As this movement has developed it has assumed many different expressions and forms. The dervish orders usually accept the doctrine of the Sufis and

they have organized themselves throughout the whole Moslem world, and the strength of their movement must be added to whatever is said of the Sufis in seeking to calculate the spiritual force of Islam. One of these sects is the Bakhtashiyeh. It is a dervish order founded in Bokhara and has been famous for centuries for the mystic girdle worn by the followers of the order. This girdle is put on and off ceremoniously seven times; each time the worshiper takes it off and puts it on he uses the following formula:—

I tie up greediness and unbind generosity,
 I tie up anger and unbind meekness,
 I tie up avarice and unbind piety,
 I tie up ignorance and unbind the fear of God,
 I tie up passion and unbind the love of God,
 I tie up hunger and unbind spiritual contentment,
 I tie up Satanism and unbind Divineness.

It has already been noted that the central idea in Islamic mysticism is the thought of God. Among the dervish orders this finds expression in a religious ceremony known as the Zikr—or the remembrance of God. As the Zikr is carried on in many different ways by different branches of Dervishes, no description of any one would be true of all. The Dancing Dervishes are perhaps the most famous, but the

thought of remembering God and meditating upon His names is common to all. In Egypt probably half the Moslem population is connected in one way or another with these dervish sects. The Wahhabis of Arabia, while they represent the puritans of Islam, are certainly mystical in character and the same is true of the Sennousis of North Africa, another famous sect of Dervishes. The Mahdi of the Sudan and the Mad Mullah of Somaliland represent other types of dervish orders.

A divergence in purpose and aim is noticeable as these spiritual movements filter down to the masses of the people. Such men as the Mahdi of the Sudan made use of his dervish faith to wage war. He played upon the superstitions of a simple-hearted people and persuaded them that through the spiritualizing of their bodies in prayer they would be immune to the bullets of the enemy. It is necessary to mention this because mystical movements in Islam have only retained the purity of their purpose where they have been pacifist in aim and have not sought to use force as an instrument in the propagation of religion.

Mystical elements in Islam have often been used by fanatical and orthodox Moslems for purposes of aggression and for winning the support of primitive peoples, but these are only the counterfeit of a more genuine movement centering in the worship of God.

Shall we therefore think of the mystic as he can be seen so often in many parts of the Moslem world, sitting quietly on the ground, his legs tucked under him, in an attitude of prayer, often with eyes closed and lips moving, but only speaking with "the tongue of the heart"? Let us draw near and listen. If he can be made to say aloud what is passing through his mind he will be repeating "God the hearer, God the seer, God the knower." Then will follow a period of silent meditation on one of the selected verses of the Koran which have been separately printed as suitable for this purpose. From among these verses we cull the following:—

Surat-el-Hadid, v. 2: "God is first, the manifest, and the hidden, who knoweth all things."

Surat-el-Hadid, v. 4: "God is with you wheresoever ye be."

Surat-el-Baquera, v. 109: "Whichever way ye turn there is the face of God."

Surat-er-Rahman, vv. 26-7: "All on earth shall pass away, but the face of Thy God shall abide resplendent with majesty and glory."

We find such men in China in the Province of Khansu. The influences of the mystical side of the Moslem faith are growing, and one writer on Chinese Islam says: "Saint worship and Mahdi movement are

asserting themselves and Sunni practices are gradually declining.”²¹

Similarly these mystics are to be found throughout Central Asia, in most parts of India, in the Dutch East Indies, in Persia, Syria, and all over the Middle and Near East, as well as throughout those regions of Africa where Islam has established itself.

It is necessary for us at this stage to look a little closer at the meaning of this search for God. It begins, as in other faiths, in a sense of the gulf dividing the soul from God, and in a consciousness of the separating power of sin. One woman mystic was Shawana who was known as “the weeper”; because she feared God so much she wept continually. She used to say: “She who weeps, weeps only out of knowledge of her sins and for that in which she has gone astray.”

This process of mystical development can best be illustrated by a concrete example and I give in brief summary the account of Rabia, the Moslem woman mystic. For this I am indebted to Dr. Margaret Smith’s life of this woman and for her original research into the history of Moslem women mystics. In a religion where the position of woman has been regarded as inferior to that of man and where the harem and the veil have developed a mock morality

²¹ H. D. Hayward in *The Moslem World*, Jan. 1934.

by the separation of the sexes, it is the more remarkable that so important a place should have been given by Mohammedans to their women mystics. Rabia was born about A.D. 717 in Basra where she spent most of her life. As a young child she was orphaned through the death of both her parents. While walking along the road one day Rabia was seized and sold as a slave. As she tried to run away she fell and injured her wrist, but bowing in the dust she said: "O Lord, I am a stranger, an orphan, and a slave. I have fallen into bondage and my wrist is injured yet I am not grieved by this. I desire only to satisfy Thee." One night her master overheard her saying in her worship: "O my Lord, Thou knowest that the desire of my heart is to obey Thee and that the light of my eye is in the service of Thy Court." When day broke her master called her and set her free, and Rabia left the house and started on a pilgrimage into the desert where she prayed: "O Lord, my heart is perplexed; whither shall I go? Show Thyself to me in this very place." Many legends surround these years of Rabia's life. She received many offers of marriage but refused them all for the celibate life. This she afterwards explained in verse:—

"My peace, O my brothers, is in solitude,
And my Beloved is with me always,

For His love I can find no substitute,
And His love is the test for me among mortal beings,
O Healer of souls, the heart feeds upon its desire,
The striving after union with Thee has healed my
soul."

As she became famous for her piety many disciples joined her in her journey along the mystic way. To chastity she added poverty and refused all offers of financial help from her friends. She lived the life of a recluse in a cell. When suffering came to her she was completely submissive, accepting everything as the will of God. Her life was spent in prayer and meditation, and in this she did not merely observe the set prayers of Islam, but she found the place of open and free loving intercourse with God. It is related of her that in the closing years of her life she used to go up on to her roof and there pray: "O my Lord, the stars are shining and the eyes of men are closed, and kings have shut their doors and every lover is alone with his beloved, and here am I alone with Thee."

Her prayers as they have come down to us breathe a lofty and unselfish desire to find God as all in all. "O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of Paradise exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee

for Thine own sake then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty."

Most of the Sufi writers for hundreds of years refer to Rabia. While others talked about Reality she herself learned the way and by her life brought a new content into Arab Islam.

It may help us at this stage in trying to see the clash of religious ideas as Islam spread east and west if we ask what the Sufis really taught. They believed God to be in all things and all things in Him, thus the immanence of God became one of their cardinal doctrines. To many Sufis the particular religion professed was a matter of little moment, as in their view religion served only to point the way to realities. Some religions they believed to be more helpful than others in this respect, and among them was Islam. The soul, they said, existed before the body and was confined within it as in a cage. Without God's grace no one could attain to spiritual union with God which was the goal of the devotional life.

The quest for God they compare to a journey and the seekers to travellers. When a man or woman decides to seek God he receives the title of "a seeker after God." He places himself under the instruction of some Sufi teacher and thenceforward he devotes his whole life to attaining a knowledge of God. The quest they mark off into progressive stages:—

The first stage is service, when he dedicates himself to serve God.

The second stage comes when his service is recognized by God and there develops in him a true love for God.

The third stage is the experience of this love operating within him and driving out all worldly desires.

The fourth stage is knowledge. Love brings knowledge and the seeker begins to learn something of the attributes of God.

The fifth stage is ecstasy, the experience which only comes after long contemplation and is a direct illumination of the heart by God.

The sixth stage is the discovery of truth. In ecstasy God reveals Himself and the seeker reaches a point where truth can be known.

The seventh stage is the climax—union with God.

The ideal in this quest, therefore, is to attain to "the perfect man," in St. Paul's language "to attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The absence of any controlling dogmatic theology in the Sufi system has made philosophical speculation possible and it has enabled many to attain to an experience of God which cannot be found in any religion by mere intellectual study. Sufism, therefore, by its varied religious elements drawn from many sources, provided a spiritual philosophy which could

be adapted to any part of the speculative East and which by the sanctity of the lives of many of its followers would always make an appeal to religious people the world over.

The point I am anxious to make, arising out of what has been said, is that this phase of Islam had its inception in an essentially Christian environment. The Moslems who developed the Sufi doctrines were in very close touch with Christians and had established in their search for God a friendly relationship with them. The dividing line between the two religions was not as sharply defined in earlier days before the heat of controversy and the clash of arms in the crusades had embittered feelings on both sides. If Christians came into conflict with orthodox Islam, the Sufis, too, found themselves regarded with suspicion by their fellow Moslems, and not a few of them suffered serious persecution for their mysticism.

There was a kinship between the Christian and the Sufi in their common search for reality, in their emphasis upon life wholly surrendered to God, in their self-denials and other-worldliness, in their asceticism, their devotional and contemplative life. The sayings of Christian and Moslem mystics are very similar. The Sufi regarded prayer not merely as a matter of petition, but rather a personal fellowship and communion with God. In this we have a conception of

the devotional life for which the only possible source was Christianity. Sufis have developed this aspect of prayer and say that prayer should be a silent waiting upon God's will, a mute adoration and worship in His presence. In this the Sufis were not unlike the Quakers in their doctrine of quietism. St. Clement, following the Epistles of St. John, had taught that God is love, but on the ground that the beautiful is of necessity beloved by those who recognize it; and God alone is real beauty. Similarly Sufis in this emphasis upon truth, beauty, and love, were following closely earlier Christian teaching. Our Lord spoke of the pearl of great price. The Sufis used the words as a basis of their system: "I am a hidden treasure and would fain be known."

A Persian poet uses the words: "Open the eye of the heart that thou mayest behold the spirit; that thou mayest see that which is not to be seen." Our Lord said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The Sufi bases his way of life upon the privilege given to them by God of displaying the divine attributes. This has a counterpart in St. Paul's statement that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, etc. The New Testament teaching on union with God finds an echo in the Sufi doctrines. This is brought out by Jalal-ud-Din:—

"The prophet said, that God hath declared, I am not contained in aught above or below. I am not contained in earth or sky or even in highest heaven, know this for a surety, O beloved! I am contained in the believer's heart! If you seek me, search in your hearts."

Another quotation illustrates the same theme:—

"The heart is love's register,
The book (Koran) is not better than it."

The Sufi seeks to deal with sin in human life more definitely than is the case in orthodox Islam. The complacency of the orthodox is exchanged for an introspection, a self-examination, and a striving after holiness when a man becomes "a seeker." God's will is the one dominating factor in life. Madame de Guyon, a seventeenth century Christian quietist of the Roman type, once said: "I resign, henceforth all my will is Thine," and this sentiment runs through all Sufi writing.

There is a breadth of sympathy with seekers of other faiths and a toleration of non-Moslem things which often proved to be a moderating influence to aggressive and militant Islam. Jalal-ud-Din Rumi says:—

"I gazed into my own heart;
There I saw Him, He was nowhere else."

And Jami says:—

“O Lord, none but Thyself can fathom Thee,
Yet every mosque and church doth harbor Thee.”

In seeking to assess the influence of Christianity upon Islam it should be remembered that at a time when Islam was expanding by military conquests and building up an empire by establishing Arab armies in the subdued territories, there was within the Moslem ranks a body of men who saw love as a greater force than arms, and reconciliation and peace as truer to the mind of God than empire.

At a time when fanaticism ran high and many barbarities were perpetrated in the making of converts to Islam, here was a sect of Islam that saw God in Church as well as mosque. The conception of love as the divine principle of life is Christian, and although it led to many Sufi extravagances yet it was the saving element in dark days. Canon Sell, writing on this, says: “The effect of Love at last reaches man, but only those who have the spirit of humanity and the capacity realize its full effects. Some gain philosophic wisdom only; some become religious in the ordinary sense and follow the traditional systems; but some become intoxicated with divine love. Such are the true travellers, and in them the effect increases until they get freedom from all dogma and

all ritual and even from existence itself. The desire of such an one so grows that it is said of him: 'The ocean-hearted, mighty drinker, who at one draught drinks up existence and so attains release from affirmation and negations and becomes free from all need of worship and ceremony.' "

These studies have shown us Christian influences at work in Islam in varying ways. The crushing of the Church did not mean the extinction of the Christian message. Much of what is vitally Christian, great ideals of love, sacrifice, service, fellowship, and communion with God, passed into Islam through the Sufi movement. The whole trend of world thought through military movements and political powers was towards a materialism which, while preserving the outward shell of religion, really denied the essential meaning of God by glorifying force and despising love. At such a time the Christian message was in a dim way kept alive in the hearts of men who were bold and courageous in their witness and frequently rebuked Sultans and Shahs.

The poet Jami, speaking to a ruler, says:—

"Thou art a shepherd, and thy flock the people,
 "To help and save, not ravage and destroy,
 "For which is for the other, flock or shepherd?"

Where Sufiism has drifted into Pantheism it has

lost its way, but where they have helped men to seek honestly for God they have paved the way as fore-runners for that spiritual experience which finds its completeness in Christ and in the union with God which He offers to all who follow Him.

Chapter Four

The Contribution of Islam to the Making of Modern Europe

WE HAVE seen how Islam spread westward with disastrous consequences to the Church, and have tried to ascertain causes of the failure of Christianity to maintain itself in the face of Islamic pressure.

The period to come now under review commences with the more settled conditions when the Arabs were consolidating their gains from Spain to Mecca, and carries us into the Turkish era and the attempt to conquer Europe. Here in fact we reach the point where Islam is at the zenith of its power. In studying the interaction of the two faiths from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries it will be impossible to give even an outline of the many stirring events of those times. Our main objective will be to examine the influences of the two religions, the one upon the other, and to gauge briefly the consequences to each.

The two dates we should regard as fixed points are A.D. 732, when Charles Martel defeated the Arabs in the battle of the Pyrenees, and A.D. 1683, when at

Vienna the last Turkish attack was repulsed by John III of Poland. The crescent was adopted as a military and religious symbol by the Ottoman Turks in the thirteenth century. Sir William Ridgeway says it "has nothing to do with the new moon but is the result of the base to base conjunction of two claw or tusk amulets." Whatever may have been the purpose in Turkey's adoption of this sign it well illustrates the policy of Islam in the attempted subjugation of the Western world. If a crescent is drawn on a map with one tip in the Pyrenees and the line of its curve passing through Spain, North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, to the Bosphorus, and so on to the other tip at Vienna, it will be possible pictorially to grasp the significance of Moslem ambition. The two tips of the crescent in Spain and Austria were like two great claws gradually closing together, and Islamic armies worked for the day when the two points would meet in the heart of Europe, when the continent would become a part of the Moslem empire.

With this picture of a militant and aggressive Islam in our minds let us turn to other factors than the use of the sword. If we judge Islam only by its military campaigns and Christianity by its counter campaigns we shall miss much of the real interchange of thought between the two. Scholars in every age find ways of communicating with one another, and

the search for knowledge transcends the clash of arms as men of learning recognize their type in every land.

As soon as moderately settled conditions obtained, an active trade sprang up between Northern Europe and Moslem lands. Traders came from the Caspian Sea through the Gulf of Finland to Denmark, England, and other countries. By the eleventh century the sea routes were being freely used for commerce; Moslem vessels visited the chief European ports of the Mediterranean Sea, while colonies of European traders settled in its Moslem ports. Travel and trade meant an interchange of ideas. From the ninth to the eleventh century Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem were allowed by the Arab rulers and thousands of pilgrims from Europe visited the Holy Land.

The two civilizations of Islam and Christianity which met on the shores of the Mediterranean had their focal points in Sicily and Spain. Sicily was governed by a dynasty of Norman kings from the eleventh until the thirteenth century, but it was also permeated with Moslem influence. Italian and French aristocracy mingled with Moslem leaders of thought and learning. The king of Sicily, Roger II, though professedly a Christian, spoke and read Arabic. He lived as a Moslem with his harem, and the Christian women of the island adopted the Moslem veil and dress. Sicily represented a complete break with tradi-

tional Christianity and its king was more a free thinker and philosopher than a Christian.

Spain, too, but in a much more effective way, became a center of Islamic culture. For five hundred years, from the eighth to the thirteenth century, Christians and Moslems in Spain lived side by side. The Christians of Cordova adopted the Moslem way of living, some even were circumcised and kept harems. They broke away from their traditional faith and in their new-found freedom delighted in the study of the philosophical and theological doctrines of Islam. It is surely permissible to draw the conclusion that these Spaniards passed on to their fellow countrymen and to others in different parts of Europe their knowledge of Islamic culture.

As Spain was reconquered by the Christians the superiority of Islamic culture was accepted and the assimilation of Moslem civilization still went on. Political alliances through marriage strengthened this process as when the royal houses of Castile or Aragon intermarried with the reigning Moslem families.

The strongest link between Christians and Moslems of this period was perhaps through literature. In the twelfth century Toledo was the center for the circulation in Europe of Arabic science, Archbishop Raymond himself and his society of translators rendering into Latin some of the most important books

of learning then available only in Arabic. Thus the Encyclopaedia of Aristotle and many other works were made accessible to European students, and Christian scholars found in Arabic the medium for the translation of the works of Euclid, Ptolemy, and other Greek writers. This was a restless, enquiring age in which men sought to gather the wisdom of each of the three religions—Jewish, Christian, and Moslem. A broad tolerance was conceded to all and in many places the two civilizations of Christendom and Islam were merged into one.

Mr. J. B. Trend tells us in his essay in *The Legacy of Islam* that "the Spanish Moslems created a splendid civilization and an organized economic life. Moslem Spain played a decisive part in the development of art, science, philosophy, and poetry, and its influence reached even to the highest peaks of the Christian thought of the thirteenth century, to Thomas Aquinas and Dante. Then, if ever, Spain was 'the torch of Europe.' " It would be a mistake to attribute this intellectual ascendancy to the Arabs. The Berbers were the main Islamic force in the occupation of Spain, but with them came a mixture of Syrians, Copts, and others, and in addition to these many Christian Spanish families became Moslems and brought their culture and learning into Islam. Credit must be given to Moslems for their patronage

of science, literature, and learning, but as Islam expanded it became less and less an Arab movement until ultimately the Arab was once more left in the isolation of his desert home and the Caliphate passed to the Sultans of Turkey.

In the realm of art the contribution of the two faiths one to the other was no less striking. To the Christian, art was a channel of religious teaching; by picture and symbol the truths of the faith were taught. To the Arab the representation of figures was not art but idolatry, and he regarded anything pictorial with grave suspicion. In his puritanical zeal he denounced art as effeminate and evil and would have nothing to do with it. But contact with the outside world quickly modified this conception of life and a new type of art sprang up as Caliphs sought to beautify their mosques. From a bare, barn-like structure the mosque evolved into a dignified center of worship, displaying diversity of decoration and richness of design. The peoples of other countries and of other races created in the Moslem mind the love of art. In Damascus, for example, the Christians were quick to see the advantage of teaching their conquerors to appreciate the beautiful, and it was an important development, too, when the Islamic capital moved to Baghdad in A.D. 766 and Moslems came directly under the influence of Persian art.

From the time the Arabs overflowed their borders into neighboring lands their leaders were men of big ideas. They thought in terms of world conquest. They proclaimed from minaret and mosque that God was great. They placed the founder of their faith in the front rank of the prophets of all ages, and they exalted their creed as the message of Allah to all races. Consequently when they settled down to consolidate their gains they became great builders. They found ready to hand as we have noticed an army of skilled workmen and in the Christian Churches a ground plan which was adaptable to Islamic requirements. Thus, the *mihrab* has its counterpart in the church apse, the minaret in the church tower, and the *mamber* in the church pulpit. The fusion of Christian art and Arab austerity did indeed produce something severe in its simplicity, but it was a type of architecture which has placed the Western world under a debt of gratitude to Islam.

Mr. Martin S. Brigg's *Commentary on the Dome of the Rock* at Jerusalem says it was "strictly speaking a place of witness where pilgrims circumambulated the Rock, the spot whence Mohammed was believed to have ascended to heaven. Moreover it remained unique; and for four centuries at least there was no important attempt at departure from the normal square congregational mosque with its

open court. It has been assumed far too rashly that the Dome of the Rock is simply a Roman or Byzantine type of structure, copied direct from pagan or Christian prototypes, executed by Christian craftsmen throughout, and therefore an alien work of architecture standing right outside the main stream of Arab art."

In the realm of literature and scholarship Arabs have often been the first to admit their indebtedness to the Greeks, and their contribution in a rediscovery of the writings of the ancients has been mentioned, but here, too, Moslem genius broke out in original ways which were by no means a mere copying of others. Universities sprang up at Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, and Alexandria, of which the Azhar Mosque in Cairo survives today, little changed after nearly a thousand years, and representative of an orthodox Islam combined with an old world culture which still has a charm entirely of its own.

We saw how the first invasion of the Near East by the Arabs was due to one of the swarming periods in Arabian history. The Turkish period was similarly due to a nomadic movement towards the civilized and settled western countries. H. G. Wells says: "Whenever civilization seems to be choking amidst its weeds of wealth and debt and servitude, when its faiths seem rotting into cynicism and its powers of

further growth are hopelessly entangled in effete formulae, the nomad drives in like a plough to break up the festering stagnation and release the world to new beginnings." Here, indeed, is an instance in which the Turkish plough drove into the heart of Europe and helped in a revolution of thought which is still felt throughout the world.

We have seen how for a thousand years from the flight of Mohammed from Mecca in A.D. 622 to the siege of Vienna in A.D. 1683 the menace to Europe was ever present. The capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 1099 precipitated what had long been planned in Europe, the recovery of the lost Christian territory. The times seemed propitious. In Spain Moslem rule was collapsing, and it appeared to the Christian West that an assault now upon the Near East might prove successful.

The Crusades were started in every sense as a Holy War. In their method they were more Moslem than Christian, for they sprang out of an urge of a religious revival as did Islam in Arabia. The twin ideas of pilgrimage and crusade were inseparable and the Church used them in an attempt to regain by force what it had lost through its lack of spirituality. The Pope offered to all who died on the crusades a new path to Heaven and forgiveness of sins, which is exactly what Mohammed had promised to his fol-

lowers when he first took up the sword. The pilgrim gained merit by standing on holy ground as the Moslem did when he was directed to Mecca. The Church, worried by private feuds in Europe, sought to divert the energies of a warlike people into other channels, and summoned them to fight the infidel very much as Mohammed had sought to do when he turned the divided and warring tribes of Arabia to attack the outside world of unbelievers. The argument used by the Church was that it was better to attack what was wrong than to waste time on their local wars. They were therefore enjoined to deliver the Holy Sepulchre from the infidel. A knight could still indulge in all his love of fighting and yet retain the blessings of the Church. In the same way in Islam a Moslem could wage a fierce and bitter war and feel he was fighting as the prophet had said "in the way of God."

The Crusades were popular because they allowed men to win the other world by hard fighting in this. But they also allowed men too free a scope for their natural instincts and they sanctioned bloodshed and war in the name of the Prince of Peace.

For centuries after Islam had burst upon the Christian world the Christians fought a defensive warfare, but in the Crusades they adopted Moslem methods

and sought to spread the Gospel over the world at the edge of the sword.

The Crusades, with varying fortunes, were carried out in successive waves until the seventh Crusade, under St. Louis, in the thirteenth century, when another factor entered into an already complicated situation. The Mongols at this time began to extend their empire westward, and this meant conflict with the Moslem powers of Syria and Baghdad, then the religious capital of Islam. It was at that time no part of the policy of the Mongols to embrace Mohammedanism, for they were more attracted to Christianity. The Pope indeed saw in them a new force at his disposal for the overthrow of Islam, and hopes of Mongol conversion were entertained when Kublai Khan sent messengers to Rome to ask for learned men to be sent to his court to teach his people.

But Christianity had fallen upon evil days, and actually when the delegation reached Italy there was no pope to whom they could appeal. A feud was in progress between rival Catholic parties and nothing could be done. When a pope was at last elected he chose two Dominican friars for the conversion of the greatest military power in Asia. These men, after setting out, were so terrified of the dangers before them that they took an early opportunity of giving up the enterprise!

The Mongols might have been won for Christianity if only they had been allowed to feel that the aim of the Christian leaders was to make the Mongol people a part of the Kingdom of God, but the mixture of politics and religion in Europe meant that the Mongols saw the Kingdom of God only as a means for the realization of the imperial ambitions of France and Italy. The episode furnishes a tragic story of a corrupt Church failing in its missionary obligations, and of a people who were inquiring the way of truth in Christ turning aside and ultimately accepting Islam.

The opportunity offered the Church for the evangelization of a great people was lost, and the Church has had to pay for its unfaithfulness ever since. Christianity stood at the cross roads when the Mongols appealed to Rome for help. The chance of a worldwide spiritual and moral unification of East and West through the Church has never come again. The Mongols in Central Asia adopted Buddhism and in Russia and Turkestan they accepted Islam.

It was out of the turmoil of Mongol and Moslem, Crusader and Turk that there emerged in the early thirteenth century the dominating and forceful Ottoman Turk strengthened in conflict and a fanatical believer in the mission of Islam. We cannot, however, at this point stop to study the part played by

the Turk—who had fixed his ambition on the capture of Constantinople—in the Moslem history of the period, but must turn to another important factor which will throw further light on the relationship of the two religions.

So far we have seen how futile and hopeless was the Christian imitation of Moslem methods and how the Crusades, after costing untold suffering and enormous loss of life, actually accomplished nothing. In the end Islam prevailed because the sword can never be a successful weapon in the spread of Christianity. In all these studies at each period of history this lesson more than any other has been emphasized. The use of the sword, whether by the Byzantines of Constantinople or by the Popes of Rome, has brought nothing but disaster to the Church. The sword and Christianity are incompatible because Christ is the Prince of Peace. The sword and Islam have ever gone together and harmonized because Mohammed accepted the sword as the instrument of Islamic expansion. The difference between the two faiths is as fundamental as the gulf between the characters of Christ and Mohammed. The invasion of the world by an Arab army marks the policy of the one and the Cross of Calvary that of the other. Because the Church so signally failed to understand the meaning of the Cross it succumbed to a stronger force.

H. G. Wells in his *Outlines of History* says: "A man of foresight surveying the world in the early sixteenth century might well have concluded that it was only a matter of a few generations before the whole world became Mongolian—and probably Moslem."²² From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century Christianity lost ground in both east and west, and nomadic forces of Arabia and countries further east were in control of most of the known world. If this period marks the highwater mark in Moslem expansion it also marks the lowest line of the Church's declension.

We now turn to the other factor in the world situation of this period to which allusion has just been made. The Moslem threat to Europe coincided with the European Renaissance. East and West were then no more separated into watertight compartments than they are today, and the two movements—the expansion of Islam and the Renaissance in Europe—are not isolated incidents in world affairs. They are vitally related for they acted and reacted upon each other in many ways.

Islamic prestige stood high, not only through military prowess, but much more through the growth of a Moslem civilization and culture, a love of learning and a common quest for knowledge. There was

²² *Outlines of History*, p. 385.

therefore permeating Europe an alternative civilization to Christianity. Just as Islam challenged the whole Christian position so it also offered to a world tired of its priests and their authority a new conception of a religious democracy, where religion was a lay movement stripped of all ecclesiastical trappings.

The Moslem mind stimulated Christian thinkers to a formidable criticism of the Catholic position and to intellectual attacks upon the priests, and the doctrine of the Mass, and in this way played an important part in initiating the Renaissance.

Literature has been mentioned as one of the primary factors in the European awakening. To this must be added the discovery of printing and the making of paper. It was this discovery actually which made the rebirth of Europe possible, but here again we have a link with Islam which should not be overlooked.

The art of making paper has been traced back to the second century B.C. in China, but for nearly a thousand years after this it was unknown in Europe. In the middle of the eighth century the Arabs in their expansion eastward captured Samarkand, but the Chinese attacked them and in their attempt to drive them out were defeated. The Moslems, in their counter attack and pursuit, captured a number of

Chinese prisoners who were skilled paper-makers and who taught the art to their Moslem masters. The Arabs at once began paper-making, and the trade soon spread to all parts of the Moslem world. In the course of time manuscripts on paper found their way into the Near East and thence to Europe. It was the fusion of the two civilizations in Spain which ultimately introduced the manufacture of paper into Christian Europe.²³

Thus Islam linked Europe and China together and made a contribution to European life, the influence of which cannot be calculated. The intellectual life of the world now entered upon an entirely new phase. Reading, the privilege of the few, at once became possible to the many, and with the discovery of printing the thought-life of the world led the way to a new era in its history. This was notably true of the printing of the Bible and its influence upon Europe in converting a renaissance into a reformation.

Enough has been said to show that in the centuries immediately preceding the Renaissance there was an interchange of thought between the scholars of the Moslem and the Christian world. The Renaissance, therefore, came at a time when Moslem prestige stood high, when the Christian position, as

²³ See article "Paper"—*Enc. Brit.*, 14th Edition, Vol. 17, p. 229.

expounded by Rome, was challenged, when the very culture that was essentially Christian was being compared with an Islamic culture, widely different from that to which Europe had been accustomed, yet readily accepted by many. Europe in its awakening owed something to Islam, as we have seen, for its transmission of Greek literature, but did it not also owe much to the fact that Islam represented a lay movement? It is certainly remarkable that in the revolt against the Papacy, which ultimately emerged, the reformers placed most emphasis upon the priesthood of the laity.

This claim that Islam made a serious contribution to the European Renaissance requires further elucidation. It can best be illustrated by the writings of Dante. "Dante showed both in his epic poems and in his lyrics that he had not abandoned the sphere of contemporary thought. Allegory, theology, the vision and the symbol, still determined the form of masterpieces which for perfection of workmanship and for emancipated force of intellect rank among the highest products of the mind."²⁴ Dante was a precursor of that liberty of thought which marked the following century, yet there can be no doubt that he owed much in his theology and legends to Islam. There is a curious likeness between Dante's poem

²⁴ *Enc. Brit.*, 14th Edition, vol. 19, p. 126.

and its Islamic sources. The legends of the Moslem Hadith form a background for the life hereafter as depicted by Dante. He lived at a time when Moslem culture was all-pervading. He must have had many contacts with Islamic thought and literature and although the sincerity of his faith was beyond question yet he was not thereby shut off from an appreciation of an oriental culture. Mohammed he consigns to hell as the author of discord and schism. This was but the reflection of the orthodoxy of his day, but in spite of this he displays a sympathy with Moslem philosophers, and in some of his prose writings he quotes the works of Moslem astronomers and philosophers. It is interesting to note that in his *Paradise* Dante places Sigier of Braband, the champion of Averroism, side by side with St. Thomas Aquinas, and yet Sigier died under the ban of the Church!

Dante was an eclectic scholar who drew his theories from many thinkers, both Christian and Moslem. This is seen from the way he used Islamic mystics, their images, symbols and literary devices. Miguel Asin, in his *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, refers to Dante's indebtedness to the Moslem mystic, Ibn Arabi, and says: "Ibn Arabi uses the same symbols as Dante to express the metaphysics of light, an essential part of the thought of both. God is pure

light, and His manifestation is described by similes of light—diffusion, illumination, reflection, and irradiance—which are all typical of Dante's imaginings. The geometrical symbol of the circle and its center, representing the Cosmos and its divine principle, recurs even more often in Ibn Arabi than in Dante, and gives rise to similar paradoxes in the works of both writers."²⁵

In one of Dante's visions he sees a young man, dressed in white and with a sad and pensive appearance. Such visions are very common among Moslem mystics who frequently claim that through them God has revealed Himself to them as the Beloved in human form.

Space will not allow the further development of this theme but it can be established that behind much of the Divine Comedy there lie Islamic legends. The architecture of the Inferno has its source in the religious traditions of Islam. The story of Mohammed's nocturnal journey and ascent to heaven forms a basis for much in Dante. This is fully developed by Asin who says: "The Moslem torture of murderers (in the 13th tier) who are being perpetually knifed and resuscitated, is clearly the model of Dante's punishment in the ninth valley of the eighth cycle, of the authors of schism. Here indeed,

²⁵ Miguel Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, p. 265.

in sarcastic vein, he places Mohammed, the very protagonist of the legend upon which he probably based his work."²⁶

Thus we trace Islamic influences in Europe and how they affected its art, culture, and literature. The clash of ideas, the study of comparative religion thrust upon Europe by the presence in its midst of a non-Christian people, and the reputation of Moslem scholars for learning all contributed to the awakening of the Western world.

The Renaissance was a release from an imposed authority, a demand for the freedom of the intellect, a challenge to Christian standards and morals, and an expression of ideas which coincided in time with new developments of science, the enterprise of adventurers who made voyages of discovery east and west, the new dissemination of knowledge through the printing press and the making of paper, and a strong urge among the common people for social uplift and equality. The educated classes had little or no use for the Church, the Turkish victories had robbed the Roman Empire of its old prestige. The claim of the Church to universality was challenged as Islam held sway over so large an area of the world.

In many ways the Renaissance may be said to date from the fall of Constantinople in A.D. 1453. The

²⁶ Miguel Asin, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

Christian capital of the East had long been threatened by Turkish forces and eventually internal dissensions and the divided state of Christendom led to the downfall of the great city. The Cathedral Church of Santa Sophia became a Moslem mosque and Islam held sway in the greatest stronghold in Europe and in one of the most strategic centers in the world.

Sir Mark Sykes says: "Constantinople as the city of the Sultans was Constantinople no more; the markets drew away, the culture and civilization fled, the complex finance faded from sight; and the Turks had lost their governors and their support. On the other hand, the corruptions of Byzantium remained, the bureaucracy, the eunuchs, the palace guards, the spies, the bribers, the go-betweens—all these the Ottomans took over and all these survived the luxuriant life. The Turks in taking Stamboul let slip a treasure and gained a pestilence!"

Turkey was not then conscious of its danger. As a military power it was still in the ascendant and the next step was an attempt to capture Rome. Otranto was seized by a Moslem force, but the death of Mohammed, the Turkish leader, brought this particular expedition to an end. The campaign, however, continued and during the next fifty years Islam captured Armenia and Hungary, and came near to entering Vienna. All Eastern Europe was brought

under Moslem rule, and seemingly the Turkish army was invincible.

The immediate consequences of this disaster to the Church were two-fold—first, the capture of Constantinople drove many Greek scholars westward and enabled Europe at last to secure direct translations of ancient writers, and secondly, it made more definite the closing of the old trade routes between Europe and Asia.

For a long time Europe had had to depend upon versions of books that had come to it through the medium of the Arabic language. Now Greek once more became a language better known and studied in the West. While these literary and scientific influences were at work and Christians and Moslems were fraternizing in so many ways through trade, art, and study, the Turkish military forces were maintaining their pressure upon Europe. The Mediterranean became virtually a Moslem sea and Europe was literally pushed out into the Atlantic Ocean, and at the same time cut off from her Eastern markets. The Turks sought to isolate the unconquered parts of Europe, to strangle their trade and thus to open the way for further Islamic expansion westward. In every part of Europe the pressure of this policy was felt and merchants saw themselves faced with ruin. There was general inquiry about possible

new ways to the East. The Portuguese had been speculating upon the chances of rounding the coast of Africa in order to reach India, and in 1486 Diaz reported that he had sailed round the south of Africa.

The day of maritime exploration had come and yet it is doubtful whether the urge to sea adventure would ever have found a response in Europe had not the old trade routes been closed by Islam. Would Columbus ever have discovered America had not the necessity and urgency of the European situation created the stimulus to new adventure? This is, doubtless, speculation, but the point to be kept clear is that Turkey by her policy of closing trade routes and thus cutting off Europe from the East actually rendered an immense service to the West. The voyages east and west meant the discovery of a new world and the opening up of new routes to India and beyond. Vasco da Gama in 1497 A.D. sailed from Portugal round the Cape to Zanzibar and from there with the help of an Arab pilot he found his way to India.

Europe began a new and modern era in its history. Expansion once more was possible and discoveries through voyages of adventure coupled with the new revelations of science and learning were leading the Western countries to a place of supremacy in the

world—and that at a time when the outlook seemed blackest and the perils greatest. Spain, which for so long had been under Moslem rule, sprang into power and wealth through the discovery of America. England, France, and Holland followed hard in the wake of Spain, and to the Renaissance there was added the new idea of empire.

While these events, thrilling as they appear to us now, were being quietly enacted in Europe, Islam was gathering its forces for a final bid for the conquest of Europe. In her assault upon Vienna in 1683 A.D., she was, as we have already seen, completely overthrown when John III of Poland inflicted his crushing defeat upon the Turkish forces. It is necessary to record this again because the discoveries of new routes to the East and the general awakening in Europe combined to isolate Islam. Instead of traversing Moslem lands as in former days merchants now avoided and went round them. Thus the Moslem policy of isolating Europe really acted like a boomerang, for it came back with redoubled force upon Islam and left the Moslem world separated and isolated in the Near and Middle East. Islam, thus cut off from the fresh springs of learning and having begun to decline in power, turned back to its old conservatism and orthodoxy and eventually stagnated.

On this subject of the decline of Islam through-

out the nineteenth century let a Moslem writer himself speak. In *The Islamic Review* for March, 1936, this writer says: "There are many causes for our present unhappy condition. Such causes are either external or internal. Among the internal causes, I regard the disappearance of intellectual freedom as being the gravest. Under the Abbasides, the Mutazilites or Rationalists enjoyed absolute freedom of thought. It was due to this that they were able not only to preserve the wisdom and learning of ancient Greece and Rome, but themselves to make most valuable contributions to human knowledge. Time does not permit me to dilate upon their achievements, but I should like to state, that so long as the Rationalist school flourished there was unbounded progress in Islam. The Rationalists, following and adopting the spirit of the law, were yet not wholly concerned with the letter of the law. The result was that the law became elastic, capable of advance and development. . . . The moment intellectual freedom declined, the law became rigid and incapable of further expansion and development. It was due to the 'Traditionalists' in Islam that the greatest blow was struck at intellectual freedom. This school did not permit any expression of opinion other than what was contained or supposed to be contained in the 'Traditions' and in the Koran."

This frank statement is very revealing. When Islam lost its military power of expansion and when, through its own act of isolation, it closed the trade routes to the East, it entered upon an internal conflict between the Rationalists and the Traditionalists, and in most parts of the Moslem world the Traditionalists won the day. Western education and ideas were not regarded with favor, in fact things foreign were ruled out and Islam, self-contained, self-centered, and isolated, turned in upon itself, and gloried in its past achievement, adopting orthodoxy as the slogan of its religion.

To quote again from *The Islamic Review*:—

“While amazing changes were going on around us we slumbered on, caring not what passed by our doors. This naturally resulted in loss of temporal and spiritual power, and by the end of the last century very large slices of once Moslem territory had passed into foreign hands. Intellectually the Moslems up to the end of the last century, were in exactly the same position and state as people were in the Middle Ages.”

The state of Islam has been attributed to two widely different causes. On the one hand there is that given in the quotation above from a Moslem writer, namely, the restriction of intellectual freedom, and most people today will agree with him that

in the triumph of the orthodox party there began the decline and in some places the decay of Islam. On the other hand there are those who have read a diametrically opposite construction into the signs of the times. An excellent example is to be seen in the Wahhabi Movement of Arabia. Here the argument was that through contact with the outside world Moslems had become lax in the observance of the rules of their religion, and because of their departure from the primitive faith, had lost their power and leadership in the world. Their slogan therefore was—Back to the Prophet.

Mohammed Ibn Abd-ul-Wahhab was born in Nejd in A.D. 1691. After studying Islam in Medina and other places he returned to his native village perplexed and distressed at the wide differences between Islam as he saw it and the Islam of the Prophet. He saw the laxities and superstitions of Moslems, the display of wealth and the luxury of the believers. He therefore began to preach the pure faith of Mohammed himself.

His teaching aroused opposition, and Abd-ul-Wahhab took refuge with Mohammed Ibn Saoud—a tribal chief of great influence. This zealot, puritan, and reformer followed so closely in Mohammed's footsteps that he immediately adopted an ambitious plan of using the sword to compel Arabia to return to

a purer form of religion. It was the son of Ibn Saoud, the protector of Abd-ul-Wahhab, who in A.D. 1765 carried on the campaign with such signal success. He succeeded, through his conquests, in establishing his rule throughout Arabia. He was murdered by a Persian in A.D. 1803, and his son, the great Saoud, succeeded him.

Wherever this reforming army went the stern principles of their faith were enforced. Pipes and tobacco were destroyed, rosaries and amulets were stripped from the people, silks and satins were forbidden as worldly, and burnt. All Moslems were compelled to pray five times a day and when the call to prayer was sounded, servants of the law went forth with whips and drove the lazy to their devotions. As Mohammed in the seventh century had captured and purified Mecca so the Wahhabis in the early nineteenth century occupied the city and purged it of its false ways. Turkey, at last frightened and aroused, sent an army into Arabia, and the Arab leader, Abdulla, the son of Saoud, was defeated, captured and ultimately executed in Constantinople in 1818. The Wahhabi power was broken and its devotees scattered. This was thought to be the end of an Arab interlude in a peaceful world of Islam. But the Wahhabi movement was too true to primitive Islam to die out entirely.

How prophetic are the words of Mr. Wilfred Blunt in his *Future of Islam*! Commenting on the Wahhabi movement he says: "I believe it is hardly now recognized by Mohammedans how near Abd-ul-Wahhab was to complete success. . . . Just as the Lutheran reformation in Europe, though it failed to convert the Christian Church, caused its real reform, so Wahhabism has produced a real desire for reform. Islam is no longer asleep, and were another and a wiser Abd-ul-Wahhab to appear, not as an heretic, but in the body of the orthodox sect, he might play the part of Loyola or Borromeo with success."

History repeats itself and the story of the present ruler of Saoudi Arabia is an eloquent comment on Mr. Blunt's prophecy. After the break-up of the tribe and the loss of all power the present descendant of the Saoudi clan appeared dramatically in 1901 in Nejd, of which he was the real hereditary ruler, and by a series of skilfully planned skirmishes and battles has made himself master of all Arabia. He is probably the greatest Arab since Mohammed and in his person are embodied the seventh century principles of primitive Islam. A new day has dawned in Arabia since Ibn Saoud conquered Mecca. Like Mohammed he has once more purged the city. He has stopped tribal warfare and as did the Prophet before him, he has united the sundered tribes of the

desert under a single allegiance. In the heart of this modern world of the twentieth century, when in many lands Islam is changing out of all recognition, there has emerged from the desert wastes the same old Islam with its stern monotheistic faith, its policy of *jihad*, its puritan hatred of everything that has a semblance of idolatry or luxury. Islam in its real home, Arabia, is in our day the Islam of the seventh century.

The relation of this story of Saoudi Arabia, however, anticipates what is really within the scope of the subject of the next chapter—the renaissance in the Moslem world, or the impacts of Western civilization upon an awakened Islam.

The point we reach today is the decline of Islamic influence and power. Militant leaders of Islam linked militarism to religion and staked everything on the policy of fighting the Christian infidels. This was particularly noticeable in the Turkish period. A Moslem writer, Refiq Bey, published in 1906 a book entitled *The Holy Wars of the Prophet*. In it he says: "Islam has produced all the best virtues of war. . . . The highest Islamic virtues are the foundations of the highest qualities of the warrior, and the Ottomans have adopted the method of the wars of the Prophet in all their military activities." He goes on

to quote sayings of Mohammed which he claims have given divine sanction to militarism. The Prophet says: "I have been sent by the Almighty in these last days with the sword. I myself and my nation shall not let the sword quit our hands until people worship Allah. My sustenance depends on the sword. All who do not obey my commands shall be subdued and humiliated."

The old Moslem mentality stands out clearly in every page of Islamic history. "Fight in the way of God." But when Islam lost its fighting power and was in turn driven back it immediately began to wane. Nor could it revive until a new mentality could be created. Another cause of decline has been the Moslem attitude to canon law. Moslem law is God's law and therefore unalterable. This, as we have seen, made it impossible for Moslems to adapt themselves to the changing conditions of a new age. It is needless to speak of such practices as polygamy and easy divorce. Old Islam is well known. The remarkable thing is that in most Moslem countries there existed, in spite of orthodox rigidity, groups of more liberally minded men who in every age had ever deplored the connection of the sword with Islam. Moslem mystics on the spiritual side, and agnostics on the secular side, each from their different points

of view, kept alive a spirit of inquiry and helped to create the atmosphere in which a new outlook could grow.

A recent writer reviewing the past when Turkey was tied politically, socially, and religiously to Islam, said: "The present struggle is against an Asiatic mentality. The situation is clear. In Europe there is no literate or illiterate person who acts by revelation, whereas in Asia there is nothing else but prophets and saints and divine rulers. The main lines of this (old) mentality are the following:—

"Truth cannot be discovered by reason, but by tradition.

"Life must be administered, not through human principles discovered by the human intellect, but by the divine laws which are unchangeable.

"To ascribe everything to fate and destiny.

"To reject the national life and to remain bound by religious tradition.

"To pay absolute homage to a religious head."

The writer of this summary sets forth this new attitude to life in clear terms when he says: "The Asiatic mentality must be rejected totally, and the European mentality must be adopted totally; there is no other way of salvation. We are living in an era

of nationalism. Arabic social life is to be rejected; the policy of following Islam is to be abandoned."²⁷

We stand, therefore, as it were on a bridge. We see the old order passing away and the birth of a new order. Islamic internationalism giving place to a new nationalism. Conservative theology thrown over in favor of secular education. Orthodoxy relegated to the museum and the history book. We look back at the disappearance of much that was picturesque and romantic, an old world culture, the splendor of the mosque, and the dignity of the sheikh. The convictions of hundreds of years are suddenly challenged and then thrown into the melting pot, that out of this new brew there may emerge a strong national consciousness and an all-pervading patriotism that will put country before religion and nationality before Islam.

²⁷ Abel Adam, *The Book of Mustapha Kemal*, p. 107.

Chapter Five

The Influences of Europe in the Disintegration of Modern Islam

WE HAVE traced the action and interaction of Islam and Christianity upon each other and we have seen how Christianity, having been overthrown by Islam, entered into its system and enriched it in its theology, art, literature, and architecture. We have noted, too, that Islam, by its patronage of the arts and the lay character of its faith, had helped to create in Europe the desire for a more open-minded and unfettered investigation of truth. This has led us to examine some of the influences of Islam upon European history notably in the period following the Crusades and in the beginnings of the Renaissance. Then we have also found how Islam, all powerful in the Mediterranean, had closed the trade routes and compelled European merchants to find alternative ways to the East, and this we saw resulted in its own isolation and the expansion of Europe. It is this curious situation which faces us as we begin to consider the modern phase of Islam.

As Christendom discarded the fetters of medieval-

ism and developed in scientific discovery, Islam stagnated under the weight of a dead orthodoxy, locked up to itself, undisturbed, complacent, and decadent. Just as Islam had broken in upon a decaying Greek world in the seventh and eighth centuries, so Europe broke through the barriers into the world of Islam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and set in motion forces which have worked a veritable revolution from end to end of the Moslem world. By the eighteenth century Western trade was increasing so rapidly that merchants refused any longer to go round the outskirts of Islam. Time was too short and more direct routes had to be made available. This led to a series of visits by Europeans to various Moslem lands. With the advent of steam, the railway, and finally the aeroplane, the world of Islam was entered, crossed and recrossed, the old routes were opened up once more, the hatred of centuries was alleviated, though not buried, in a new and growing commerce. The Suez Canal gave a direct route to India, the Bosphorus pointed a way to the North Sea, and the Russian route to the Caspian brought Persia considerably nearer to Europe.

Politically, large bodies of Moslems passed under European government as in India and the Dutch East Indies. North Africa came under French rule

and as the Russian Empire expanded eastward a number of smaller Moslem states were controlled from Moscow. In spite of this the solid block of Islam, as the heart of the religion, remained largely unchanged. Arabia, Turkey, Iraq, Persia, and Afghanistan were independent Moslem countries where the Koran and Shariat still formed the basis of the law.

With the new contacts between Islam and Europe there followed the opening of these countries also to the influences of Western civilization, modern education and European democracy.

This is ably summarized by Dr. Lothrop Stoddard:—"While the Moslem East was sinking under Mongol harryings and Turkish militarism," he writes, "the Christian West was thrilling to the Renaissance, and the discoveries of America and the water route to India. The effect of these discoveries simply cannot be over-estimated. When Columbus and Vasco da Gama made their memorable voyages at the end of the fifteenth century, Western civilization was pent up closely within the restricted bounds of west-central Europe and was waging a defensive struggle with the forces of Turanian barbarism. Russia lay under the heel of the Mongol Tartars, while the Turks, then in the full flush of their martial vigor, were marching triumphantly up from the

south-east and threatening Europe's very heart. Then in the twinkling of an eye the sea wall became a highway, and dead-end Europe became mistress of the ocean—and thereby mistress of the world."²⁸

The situation we now examine presents a complete change in the political conditions of the world, a stagnant and in some aspects decrepit Moslem world, guided by a Caliph in the corrupt Turkish Empire came face to face with an awakened Europe equipped with the discoveries of modern science, aggressive, powerful, and dominated by a lust for territorial expansion. Worn-out Moslem states as we have seen, came one by one under the control of one or other of the powers of Europe until most of the Islamic world was under foreign domination.

As education spread, however, Moslems awoke to the significance of political events so vitally affecting their future and once more a ferment began which proved to be the initiation of the modern period in Moslem history. Just as Islam began in the deserts of Arabia so the first signs of an awakening came from the same sandy wastes.

Before we study this modern phase it may help us if we look at one or two of the factors governing the new movements. We have already noted how Islam adapts itself to racial coloring and envi-

²⁸ *The New World of Islam*, pp. 16-17.

ronment, how it expresses the culture of a new habitat as well as the faith of the Arabs, in other words how it differs theologically and socially from country to country according to the background of the people of the particular land into which it has penetrated. It follows that in the renaissance of Islam and the awakening of the Moslem world throughout the nineteenth century we shall find very varied reactions to the impacts of Western thought.

The whole of that world without exception had in some measure been affected by Western influences. From China to Europe Moslems were profoundly disturbed at the parcelling out of their territories by European powers, though Europe was actually only doing what Islam had itself done in its own expansion. The glory of world conquest had departed from Islam, and while Moslems generally accepted things as they found them there were groups of far-seeing educated men who rejected the fatalism of their creed and began to work for the defence of their countries.

In Arabia many were staggered by the laxity of their co-religionists in their observance of the rules of the faith and consequently there developed as we have already seen, through the Wahhabi movement, a new Puritanism. In Egypt, under Sheikh Mohammed Abdu, an Islamic modernism began which sought to give a liberal interpretation to the Koran

and to bring Islam into line with the scientific thought of the day. In French North Africa the effect of the new education tended to break down the defences of Islam and to leave the educated people mere secularists with no religion at all.

India, on account of its distance from the heart of Islam, has developed its own sects and cults and such movements as the Ahmadiya sect of Qadian is an indication of one of the effects of India upon Islam. Persia, never regarded by Arabia as orthodox, at a very early date adopted the Shiah faith and thought out the implications of the religion along her own lines. Mystics flourished and a form of pantheism was common among Sufis. Out of this freedom of expression in Persia there sprang the Babist sect and later the Bahais. Turkey, because of its proximity to Europe, was always the more susceptible to secular thought, and the modernist and the orthodox were kept in two hostile camps. On the one side there grew up under Abdul Hamid, the Red Sultan, a defence of orthodoxy coupled with Pan-Islamism, a scheme for the organization of all Moslems under a common spiritual allegiance to the Caliph at Constantinople, in defence of their faith against the aggressions of Western powers. On the other side there developed a reaction to this movement among a section of the Turks through a fresh investigation

of the influences of Islam upon their country, which led to a new emphasis upon nationalism as distinct from Pan-Islamism. Many came to the conclusion that the religious connection with Arabia was really the cause of Turkey's backward condition. Politically they feared the responsibility of having to defend against the world, not only their own land, but all Moslem countries. As the two theories developed, Nationalism and Pan-Islamism were found to be opposed in ideal and therefore incompatible with one another. The effects of this will be seen later, but for the present may we note the two alternative policies, first that of Abdul Hamid in seeking to unite Moslems the world over under the green flag of Islam, and secondly that of the young Turkish party whose leaders were actually much more realist in outlook than the Sultan. The cross currents were many and the results of this conflict of thought were quickly seen. The Sennousi movement, for example, refused to join the Pan-Islamic movement of the Sultan of Turkey and formed religious fraternities of its own in many parts of the Moslem world. The originator of this movement, Mohammed ben Sennousi, was born in Algeria in 1800 A.D. He founded his brotherhood in the deserts of North Africa upon the apocalyptic hopes of a coming Mahdi, and in their isolation they dreamed of the day when once more

they could burst upon a corrupt and infidel world and compel them to accept Islam. Similarly the Wahhabi movement in Arabia formed its own brotherhoods. Mecca became the Geneva of the Moslem world. Moslem preachers went everywhere proclaiming the faith and summoning the followers of Mohammed to be ready for the day. Into the heart of Africa they penetrated winning converts on a large scale from the pagan population. A chain of Mohammedan mosques sprang up the whole way along the east coast of Africa from Suez to the Cape of Good Hope. The Mahdi rebellion in the Sudan in 1882 drove a Moslem wedge into Central Africa from the north and India sent missionaries of Islam to the west coast.

Still another movement was started by Seyed Djemal-el-Din Afghani. He was born in the early part of the nineteenth century, in Persia. He travelled in many lands as the stormy petrel of Islam, arousing anti-Christian feelings among Moslems, and warning them that the Christian world through its growing power was planning the destruction of Islam. He denounced inequalities of treatment meted out by Europeans, complaining, for example, that what Christians in their own lands called patriotism they termed fanaticism when referring to Moslem peoples.

As this study is not meant to be a history of

Islam but rather a consideration in the influences of Islam and Christianity, one upon the other, we can only note the currents of thought which were so powerful throughout the Moslem world in the nineteenth century. Where they were leading no one seemed to know. Lord Cromer, in his history of modern Egypt, says "Islam reformed is Islam no longer," and many at that time saw in the new liberalism the complete break-up of Islam. The influence of such movements as that of Mohammed Sennousi upon European politics was considerable and the growth of Islamic brotherhoods was watched with some concern. Justin Macarthy in his *History of Our Own Times* records that in 1853 the Czar of Russia invited England to join with him in the division of the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire "before what he regarded as the approaching and inevitable day when the sick man—so the Emperor called Turkey—must come to die." The Czar claimed the right to protect Christian subjects in Turkey and he aimed at using this as a political lever to strengthen the hold of Russia upon Turkey. Britain gave a definite refusal to any such bargain saying she "did not think it quite usual to enter into arrangements for the spoilation of a friendly power and that England had no desire to succeed to any of the possessions of Turkey."²⁹ This

²⁹ Justin Macarthy, *A Short History of Our Own Times*, p. 137.

is mentioned merely because it is an indication of the European attitude to Islam. It was such statements as that of the Czar of Russia that inflamed the Moslem world, and kept Islam and Christianity poles apart. It was this policy in Russia and elsewhere of using Christian minorities in the Turkish empire for political purposes that led ultimately to the horrible massacre of Armenian and other Christians. The Christian minority became virtually a state within a state. Although they were Turkish subjects they expressed little or no loyalty to Turkey and were often the tools of Europe through which political pressure was brought to bear upon the Ottoman Empire. The attitude of Europe, (and that was regarded by Moslems everywhere as the Christian attitude), towards Turkey, was that she was decrepit and worn out, and towards Islam, (of which Turkey was recognized as the bulwark), that she was hide-bound by tradition, and was cracking and crumbling before the onslaughts of Western science and civilization. Lord Cromer's dictum was generally accepted as a true statement of the situation.

What many students of Islam failed to see was that while a new nationalism might in many countries break the political power of Islam as the dominating factor in State affairs, and while the growth of a new racial consciousness would separate Turk and Arab,

yet religious Islam would not necessarily disappear because it had lost temporal power. The old orthodoxy might crumble as Western education developed but another and a modern Islam would arise which would seek to interpret its faith in terms of the new scientific world to which the followers of Mohammed had been introduced. While the dreams of Pan-Islamism would vanish like a morning cloud because race would prove a stronger factor than religion, yet an Islamic nationalism need not mean nationalism without Islam. Renaissance, therefore, is not too strong a word to use in connection with the awakening of Islam.

The impacts of the West are largely responsible for these revolutions and changes which are so profoundly affecting the Moslem world, and before we proceed further we must summarize these changes to help us to see some of the forces at work.

There is an economic revolution in progress. We noticed how in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries Moslem lands adopted an isolationist policy and thus cut themselves off from the streams of culture from the West. Stagnation continued until this policy was reversed and the Moslem world once more threw open its gates to external influences. This in a measure was forced upon Islam. The restless organizing West cut roads and railways through the Near and

Middle East. A railway runs now through Egypt and is linked to the steamer service to Khartoum. Kordofan, the old closed territory of the Mahdi is joined to Egypt and Europe by an iron road, and Port Sudan has become one of the great gateways to Africa. Palestine now has excellent motor roads and a railway runs from Egypt to Haifa and joins the Syrian-Constantinople line, thus forming a road and rail communication between Cairo and the Bosphorus. From Damascus to Baghdad a regular fleet of motor cars carry passengers to Iraq and on into Iran, a land which is rapidly opening up its cities and towns by new means of communication of road and rail. Aeroplane services are established all over the Moslem world, telegraph and telephone spread the news of the world to the most remote villages. The radio has linked many lands together and with the growth of education there is an increasing number of Moslems in all these lands who speak one or more European languages. When we contrast conditions today with those which obtained only a quarter of a century ago the changes are startling. Before the Great War Turkey would not allow a motor car into Palestine or Syria and there was no adequate land communication between Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Closed lands are now open and it has become the

turn of the Western world to share its heritage and culture with Islam.

This implies much more than may at first appear. For example, strict Moslems have always refused to accept interest on invested capital on the ground that it was usury and therefore forbidden by the Koran. The law governing this is set forth in the Koran—sura II—verse 276—“They who swallow down usury shall arise in the last day only as he ariseth whom Satan has affected with his touch.” Usury is an illegal transaction in Islam, and I have often known Moslems when placing money on deposit in a bank to stipulate that they were not to be credited in their account with any interest which might be due to them. Now the sudden commercializing of Moslem lands meant that vast sums in capital were required for new enterprises and to leave it to the West to find this capital must inevitably have resulted in the domination of the Moslem world by Western powers. For a long time Moslems did not see the significance and power of invested capital. If the European or the American were prepared to sink his money in their country, why let him do so they argued. Gradually, however, the implications came home to them and Islam began to ponder. A revised interpretation had to be found for verses in the Koran which though suitable for an Arabian desert administration of the

seventh century, were obviously out of date and wholly inadequate for the modern conditions of life. Thus the prejudice against interest on capital is rapidly disappearing and with this departure from a time-old practice are coming many other changes. For example European clothes are being generally worn in many Moslem countries and in Turkey the difficulty of conforming to Islamic requirements of worship in trousers and a Western hat has produced some amusing situations.

All this has caused serious heart-searching, particularly in the minds of young men. Is religion to be the deciding factor for them? How are they to adapt their faith to modern requirements? How can they adjust a non-Moslem culture and learning and a secular attitude to life to their own religious conceptions and creed? Here, as in so many other parts of the world, the issue is between a religious and a material basis to life.

If an economic revolution is working such violent changes among the followers of Islam, they are equally affected by the political ferment which in a large measure is caused by the new contacts of the Moslem world with Europe. It is curious that in an age when Christians are placing great stress on internationalism and are seeking to unite Christians throughout the world on an international basis, Islam is turning

from its old pan-Islamic policy to a new nationalism which in some countries is virtually another religion and even a substitute for Islam itself. Russia is an enigma in the modern world but Russia boasts of having completely secularized the minds of the millions of its Moslem subjects and of having turned young Moslems into ardent atheists.

Nationalism is not expressed in the old terms of patriotism, but in the new language of totalitarianism, in which a nation seeks to be regarded as a community above which no higher law or power is acknowledged. The new nationalism claims such absolute obedience as to conflict seriously with the conscience of religious people. Into an awakened Moslem world, then, there has come with terrific force the passion and idealism of nationalism. The youth of Islam has caught the vision of a new day and is pushing the older and more orthodox of his co-religionists out of the way. He lays rough hands on the old standards of Islam and boldly places his country before his religion. This, as we shall see, is particularly true of Turkey, but it is becoming increasingly true of the youth movements in other countries too.

To the appeal of patriotism and country there must be added the less sensational but more productive work of education. In the pre-war Turkish empire an educational system in the modern sense did

not exist. In countries like Syria and Palestine, schools and colleges were largely in the hands of missionaries, who organized a net-work of schools throughout the Near East. The Robert College at Constantinople, the American Colleges of Smyrna, Beyruth and other centres are a few examples of an educational venture, which has proved of immense influence in the development of the Near East in spite of alternating Turkish hostility and indifference. Today this is all altered and Turkey has its own nation-wide educational program, and in most Moslem countries the conduct of schools and colleges has become a national responsibility and a major plank in nationalist propaganda.

Scientific progress during the nineteenth century was responsible in the Christian world for a new criticism of Christianity. The century had given to the world a record of wonderful achievement by which in many different departments of knowledge man claimed to have discovered the key to the harnessing of natural forces to his own ends. A new philosophy had sprung up based on the inevitability of progress, and the Christian position was challenged at every turn. This process of critical analysis which had to be faced by the Church in the nineteenth century is making its full impacts upon Islam today. Scientific method compels men to probe into

the religion of Mohammed and higher criticism is applied to the Koran and its compilation.

I sat with a group of young Moslems a few years ago in a Near Eastern city. They explained to me the change in their attitude to religion. They had all been brought up in orthodox Moslem homes, but they had found no anchorage in the faith of Islam and had become atheists. They could not believe in anything, they said. Science had made religion impossible for them. On the other hand many Moslem thinkers are steadily working their way to a new Islamic position, to a scientific study and a liberal interpretation of the Koran, and to the adaptation of Moslem law to modern requirements. This is expressed in an article in *The Islamic Review* for March, 1936. "Islam," the writer says, "has a great future, because its background is rational, its foundation sure and sound. The West realizes that Islam and Christianity cannot afford to antagonize each other, for the simple reason that nearly two-thirds of the total Moslem population of the world lives today under 'Christian rule,' by which I mean the rule of nations which profess Christianity. . . . Islam and Christianity must work for the commonweal of humanity." The article ends with these words—

"Praise be to the great Arabian who has enabled us even at this distance of time, and under such

changed conditions, to appreciate not only Islam, but the essential goodness of all faiths."

Here again is the old note which was heard among scholars of both religions in the Middle Ages and which has been lost in more recent times through rancor and hatred, misunderstanding and wars.

This liberal movement with its slogan "Back to the Prophet" really means the rehabilitation of Mohammed in a modern garb and suitable to the national cause in Moslem lands.

Some years ago I incurred the wrath of my Moslem friends by saying that Moslems were giving us now "a new Mohammed drawn from the colors of a Christian paint box." This was resented on the ground that the picture of the Prophet set forth by modern liberal writers is essentially true to the historic character of Mohammed. A book was published in refutation of my statement, but it proved on every page the truth of what I had said. It puts a very different construction on the character of the Prophet and on the Koran from that which the history and traditions of Islam reveal, different in fact from what most orthodox leaders in Arabia today would give. What it does seem to indicate is that in this liberal movement there is such a representation of Mohammed as would aim at making him the ideal of the human race, and the striking thing about the picture is that it ap-

proximates as nearly as possible to the historic Jesus of the Gospels. Facts of Islamic history, such as the use of the sword in the propagation of religion, are denied or brushed aside. A new interpretation is given to Mohammed's sanction of polygamy, slavery, and easy divorce. In all this there is a good deal of ingenious adaptability, but frequently at the expense of truth. Where the modern liberals of Islam differ from the liberals of the Middle Ages is that the earlier school of thought was fearless in its search for truth, honest in its interpretation of history, and free from the bias of a self-defending propaganda.

The ferment is still going on today. Economic, political, social, religious, and personal influences all tend to re-shape Islam and in some cases to overthrow it, so it is necessary for us to look at these changes in more detail and in relation to the various countries concerned.

The situation in 1914, when the Great War began, was one of serious strain between parts of the Moslem world and Europe, and Turkey under the urge of the young Turkish Party led by Enver Pasha, thought they saw in the War the opportunity of regaining for their country some of its lost power and prestige. For this the Pan-Islamic slogan was brought under contribution and the conflict declared to be a *jihad* in defence of the faith. The Pan-Islamic dream,

however, quickly disappeared when Arabs rose in revolt against Turkey and Moslem India refused to accept the war as a *jihad* and actually fought with the Allies. Out of the welter of the war there emerged a broken Turkish Empire. Everything had been staked on a pro-Moslem policy, and now, under the leadership of Turkey, Islam lost its political significance and value and the latent forces of nationalism came again to the fore, culminating as we shall see in the overthrow both of Sultan and Caliph and the separation of the State from religion.

The adaptation of a theocratic state, in which the ruler is regarded as God's vice-gerent on earth, to modern nationalism necessarily involved a conflict with totally different ideas of government in which Islam would become an instrument of State and its laws be inevitably discarded in favor of modern civil codes and Western methods of government. We have already seen that the Moslem world awoke to a sense of danger in the nineteenth century when its policy was formulated as one of defence. The Great War transferred the defence from the creed to the country and Turkey ceased to be concerned with upholding Islam and wholly occupied in the building up of a strong nation. One Turkish leader, when asked about the new movements, said he thought Turkey would have fared better if she had never become Moslem

at all. This is significant and has been explained to mean that by adopting Islam, Turkey fettered herself with a political-religious system, Arab in character, and therefore foreign and unsuited to the Turanian people; that by trying to defend Islam, Turkey lost herself and ruined her country, and that by allowing Islamic law to govern the country she shut herself off from the progressive countries of the West.

Today, therefore, the new dictum is heard, that nationalism and Islam are ultimately incompatible. It is true that Islam in pre-war days was hostile to nationalism because it was associated with democracy and democracy was strenuously opposed by the Sultan. He induced the religious heads of Islam to issue *fetwas* or decrees asserting that the Sultan as Caliph must reign supreme and alone. However true to Islamic tradition this may have been, it ended in the Sultan not reigning at all, and the Pan-Islamic Empire, like the Holy Roman Empire before it, broke up as men lost the sense of religious values upon which the ideal had been built.

Turkey, having studied European ways, decided to turn its back upon Islam and to face westward. The changes in Turkey came with dramatic suddenness and the world was staggered at the completeness of the new policy. When Europe regarded Turkey as broken and helpless, behold her rising phoenix-like

out of the ashes of a world conflagration to a new destiny, defeated but unconquered, broken only to find a larger unity in a new national life. The break had come at last. It had been long in preparation, and when Islam refused to recognize any binding force among men but that of the faith, it sowed the seeds of its own political destruction. Turkey discovered a unity divorced from religion and centered in racial and cultural nationalism.

The Ottoman Empire had come to an end. The elderly statesmen who had negotiated the peace treaty with the allied powers were swept aside and youth rose as the representatives of a new Turkey yet to be born. A National Assembly was set up in Angora and a Republic declared which at once abolished the Sultanate but left the Caliphate still in being. In 1922 a new Caliph was elected and appointed by a religious edict. The condition of his appointment was his recognition of the Grand National Assembly and a republican form of government. It was the last attempt to salve from the wreckage something of the long Islamic tradition in Turkey. It was, in fact, the last time a religious decree was issued. But for the moment the experiment was made of trying to retain Islam as a recognized religious entity within the new State. This experiment was, however, doomed to failure, for two years later, on March 3, 1924, three new

laws were passed through the National Assembly at a single sitting; the first was to expel from Turkey all members of the old dynasty, the second abolished permanently the Caliphate and the third brought to an end the Moslem law and the religious endowments, and transferred all Islamic schools to the Department of Education. Commenting on these changes, Madame Halide Edib says, "The Turks, already the protestant Moslems of the world, are more like the Christian protestants. They have a clear objective mind and are utterly simple in nature and they keep their religion out of their worldly concerns as a matter of course."³⁰

The year 1924 will stand out in the history of Islam as the one in which a new era was born for the peoples of the Near East, for the new laws had a far reaching significance. Islamic law was swept away and a European code accepted in its place. By the following year the policy of secularization was nearly complete. Turkey had not actually disestablished Islam; it still had its State link. This was soon to disappear, but before this eventuated the whole Republic underwent a violent change. Up to this point a group of young men had rallied round Mustapha Kemal Pasha and had recognized him first as their leader and then as President of the Republic. In

³⁰ M. Halide Edib, *Turkey Faces West*, p. 210.

1925 a divergence of opinion was visible within the Assembly, one section of which adopting the name of progressives, aimed at a liberal policy for the country. The President, however, was equal to the occasion and after a famous speech, lasting about ten hours, a new law "Of Maintenance of Order" was passed. This gave Mustapha Pasha absolute powers and Turkey once more passed, after a few brief years of democracy, to a dictatorship. What follows from this point must be regarded as largely the policy of one man who succeeded in imposing his will upon the people. The last vestiges of Islamic authority were stripped away. The name Ottoman was banned; the mosque schools were disendowed; the dervish monasteries were closed and the distinctive dervish dress forbidden. Turkey, which had begun after the War to throw off Western authority, to abolish the capitulations and to declare herself free and independent, now proceeded to adopt Western ideas and to adapt the country to Western laws and usages.

The political revolution, which placed Mustapha Pasha in a position of more absolute power than had been enjoyed by Sultan-Caliphs under the old regime, inaugurated social and other changes of no less startling a character. For years previous to these events the Turks had been purging their language and literature of foreign elements, Turkish words

being increasingly used to replace Arabic and Persian words which had come into common use. A new system of education was introduced on purely secular lines. Primary schools sprang up all over the country and the old koranic schools usually held in mosques were completely secularized. The position of women in Turkey had been steadily improving since 1908 when girls were given the same opportunities of education as boys, and in 1916 women were admitted to the universities. During the Great War, Turkish women had to shoulder many tasks previously carried by men and they found their way as clerks into Government and other offices. This freedom in the War period enabled the women to range themselves alongside the men in the great struggle for freedom after 1919. Once the new regime was established, women banded together to study the situation as it affected their sex and to make recommendations to the National Assembly. They asked that the Swedish family law should be adopted by Turkey and eventually they succeeded in giving to the family a stability and security which made possible the creation of a new home life. Polygamy is now a thing of the past and divorce is so regulated as to secure the rights of women.

In 1928 Turkey adopted the Latin characters for its alphabet. This was so serious a step that it had

been postponed until other reforms had been carried out. To discard the Arabic alphabet meant a complete severance from things koranic and Arabian, for Moslems the world over use Arabic in some form or other. The Koran is written in Arabic and its translation had hitherto been regarded as sacrilege, but it was now translated into Turkish and printed in Roman characters. Mosque prayers, too, were said in Turkish. Moslem law regarding marriage and divorce had been abolished and the new era was based upon Christian values from the West. A Christian ethic lay behind much of the civil code adopted. Christian ideals of home and family were at the basis of the new family law. The tide was once more flowing from Christianity to Islam. A Moslem Sheikh summed up these changes from his Islamic point of view when he said—"The Turkish Government as a Government has committed apostasy from its religion." The fact is the Turks knew that in order to gain their freedom they must not only throw off all attempts at European domination, but also eliminate all Islamic control. The adoption of the Gregorian in place of the Moslem Calendar which is dated from the flight of the prophet to Medina, forged a further link with the West.

Though much indirect influence of Christianity upon Islam can be traced in the new Turkey, it does

not imply that the Turks displayed any leanings toward the faith of the West. The law secularizing the State in all its departments was carried out logically and the teaching of religion was prohibited in all schools, missionary or Turkish. The Turks defied both the French and Italian governments by ordering the removal of all religious symbols from mission schools. This meant, in the case of the Roman Catholics, that either the crucifixes, crosses, and other Christian symbols had to be taken away or the schools closed. As the missionaries refused to comply with the order, thirty-six Roman Catholic schools with 12,000 pupils in Constantinople and neighborhood and twenty-five more schools in Anatolia were summarily closed. A compromise was ultimately reached when the Roman Catholics agreed to display their symbols only in rooms which were used exclusively by Catholic children, and on this condition the schools were re-opened.

In the transition in Europe, from the medieval to the modern order, Islam had her share in the shaping of the Western world. She helped in the recovery of a lost culture and in recapturing freedom of thought from Papal domination. The modern world in turn has played a remarkable part in the molding of Islamic countries in the twentieth century. By sharing with them her scientific knowledge and cul-

ture, her educational systems and literature, Europe has permeated the world of Islam with new and liberal ideas which are linking Moslem lands to the West in common bonds of fraternity and equality.

The movement which has had such striking results in Turkey is by no means confined to that country. Iran has passed through similar changes. The old regime has disappeared and a new Shah has arisen who began life as a conscript in the Cossack division of the Iranian Army. He is a self-made man, who by a strong will and determination, has placed himself in supreme power which he exercises with all the authority of a dictator. He has carried out numerous reforms which have placed his country in the main stream of world life. Road making, army reform, an air service, a new educational system, and a medical service, are among the many achievements of this remarkable man. Although he has not gone as far in his secularization as Mustapha Kemal Pasha, he is nevertheless leading his country in the same direction. The educated classes sit very loosely to Islam and already there is a marked movement away from religion and in favor of a secular basis to the national life. As in Turkey, the emancipation of women has been one of the outstanding social factors in the situation. The veil is being discarded and women are occupying a larger place in national life than here-

tofore. Iran is discovering, like Turkey, that to be strong, independent, and really free, the government must be delivered from the influence of the mullahs. Nationalism with many has taken the place of religion.

Of all the Moslem states, Turkey and Iran have made the most rapid progress in the acquisition of a new culture, but the same tendency is observable through practically the whole Moslem world.

Egypt represents a cultural liberalism among its intelligentsia where groups of men with a European education are trying to adapt Islam to modern requirements.

Moslem Palestine is at the present moment in open antagonism to the policy of "a national home for the Jews" and is more occupied by its political interests than with the development of its faith.

Iraq is in political alliance with Arabia and the Arabs once more united in their own territory, are forging new links with the Arab world beyond. Mohammed united the Arabs in his day in self-defence against a strong Byzantine power in the north and an aggressive Persian government in the east. Ibn Saoud in much the same way units the Arab world in defence against any possible aggression from an outside power.

Afghanistan passed through a revolution under

Amanullah who imported Turkish instructors for the Afghan army and sent young Afghan women to Turkey for higher education. For the present this movement has been checked and the reforming Amanullah dethroned.

The old strongholds of Tamerlane, the Islamic centers of Samarkand and the heart of Moslem Asia are in the grip of a Communism which is definitely anti-Moslem. The Moslem states from the Caspian Sea to the Afghan frontier, including Turkestan and Bokhara, are controlled by Russia and throughout this great stretch of Asia the anti-God policy of the Soviets prevails. Here the simple peasants are being taught a material interpretation of history, a theory of class war, and an almost idolatrous cult of the State.

Mohammedan fanaticism has indeed been lashed to fury by Russian propaganda and by the confiscation of religious property and endowments. For over a thousand years a fanatical Moslem priesthood held undisputed sway and their position had never before been challenged. Now they have fled in horror before Soviet guns and armored cars and a series of autonomous states have been set up under the indirect control of Moscow.

In India Islam has for centuries had its liberal party, which in recent times has been ably repre-

sented by Mr. Ameer Ali, the author of *The Spirit of Islam*. The claim in his interpretation of Islam is that "with the exception of the unity of God there was no dogma upon which insistence was placed," that is in Islam as Mohammed conceived it. But even in India the new nationalism is making serious inroads into the faith. Dr. Nicol Macnicol says, "The new hostility to all religion which characterizes so many of the educated youth of contemporary India possesses, it appears, one of its strongholds in Aligarh. One of the leading Moslem members of the staff of the university goes so far as to declare—though the view is probably exaggerated—that the spirit of secularism prevails more widely among young Moslems than among young Hindus."³¹

The situation which is thus disclosed has been admirably described by Madame Halide Edib, who writes: "One human era has passed away with the Great War and a new era is being inaugurated. We are hardly conscious yet of the world-in-the-making behind the term 'post-war' as distinguished from the old world which we call 'pre-war.' We are still groping in the smoke raised by the gigantic forces of destruction let loose in 1914; we are still writhing in the throes of birth, the supreme agony and pain

³¹ Nicol Macnicol, *The Living Religions of the Indian People*, p. 161.

which nature and spirit impose on all creative periods and actions. Against a background of black chaos stand out, in hardly perceptible relief, the future directions in which the changing world of East and West may move."³²

Our very rapid survey of present conditions in the Moslem world has revealed a process of reconstruction in progress in nearly every part, permeating, leavening, and even destroying. Only Arabia, under the leadership of Ibn Saoud, continues to stand firmly for an orthodox Islam and a seventh century interpretation of the Koran. But no people remains permanently in a stage of transition. The very word itself connotes an element of movement, and as our thoughts stray into the unknown future with its infinite possibilities we cannot but wonder what that future holds for the system set up by the Prophet of Arabia more than a thousand years ago.

Will Islam revert to its puritan form as in Wahhabi Arabia? This seems to be impossible for countries outside Arabia itself, because their cultural background is essentially non-Arab. Will Islam evolve a new liberal faith, an Eastern form of Unitarianism with Mohammed idealized as its leader? If it does, its existence and usefulness will depend upon the renunciation of the earlier Moslem policy of the sword and

³² M. Halide Edib, *Turkey Faces West*, p. 240.

a refusal to divide the world as Mohammed did, into the House of Islam and the House of War. If liberal Islam is to make good it must stand for an inclusive brotherhood based upon mutual tolerance of other faiths.

Will it ultimately lose its political significance and find a new vitality in the spiritual search for God through mysticism? No doubt some in every country will follow the Sufi quest and seek to find ultimate Reality in the mystic way, but it is unlikely that so other-worldly an ambition will capture the minds of any large number of people in this material age. It is true, nevertheless, that in the mystics Islam will find its real strength.

Will Moslems seek to rebuild a Pan-Islamism and thus to play, as a religion, an important part in world politics? This would appear to be very unlikely unless Islam is attacked. The religion is losing increasingly its political influence.

Will Islam disintegrate and lose its religious values through the influences of secularism, and communism? In some areas it certainly will for the time being. But Russian Communism is not the last word. It is only a phase in a changing world order.

Islam has fought many a great battle in the past, but the greatest battle of its history lies before it. It is the battle with itself for intellectual honesty

and real sincerity in its quest for truth. Mere propaganda and attacks on other religions will accomplish nothing. If it will stand for scholarship and learning and admit failure where there has been failure it may fulfil a new purpose in the world by a fresh emphasis upon the spiritual rather than the material, the religious instead of the political. Islam once made a great contribution to the culture of the West. The West in turn has made a similar contribution to Islam during the past fifty years in awakening the Moslem people and in helping to create the present renaissance. The greatest need of the world today is for men of goodwill in all religions who will fight for a spiritual basis to life against the new material paganism of the age, and in this Islam should play a noble part.

We may well ask—Whither Islam?

Chapter Six

The Christian Answer to the Moslem Quest

THE history of Islam and Christianity we have seen to be one of prolonged and continuous conflict. Both religions have been represented by armed forces and political powers and the fate of both has appeared at times to hang upon the result of a clash of arms. For centuries they looked more like armed camps than spiritual forces.

The first serious clash of Islam against Christianity, as has been already noted, came in 634 A.D. when in the Yarmuk Valley, in what is now known as Transjordan, 90,000 Byzantine troops were completely defeated by a small Arab army. We follow the fortunes of war through the centuries and see Islam stretching crescent-like from the Spanish corner of Europe, round the north of Africa, and through Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Constantinople and the Balkan States to Vienna.

With one horn in Spain the other horn moved forward in an ever-widening curve until in 1453 Constantinople was captured and the shadow of the crescent fell across Eastern Europe. Armies moved on

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into Hungary, and in 1529 another battle was fought and the fate of Europe hung in the balance. The Islamic assault on Europe was again frustrated, but the final effort for its conquest did not come till 1683 when Turkish forces attacked Vienna, as the Gateway to the West. This battle was decisive and marked the limit of Moslem expansion and power. From that day a steady decline set in and Europe increasingly dominated the world. The Great War of 1914-1918 marked the last attempt of a Moslem force (Turkey) to regain a world position on a Pan-Islamic policy and again defeat led to still further contractions in the Turkish empire and to the collapse of Ottoman rule and the Caliphate. In all this there has been the unworthy admixture of politics with religion. War has kept apart two great sections of the world's population and Islam and Christianity have been for centuries sundered by hatreds, misunderstandings, and conflicts. A more careful survey of this period of history, however, reveals the hidden forces of spirituality in religion, the growth of civilization, the development of art and literature, and contributions from one religion to the other which have transcended wars, crusades, and conflicts. We ask ourselves whether we are to continue to accept the position of old antagonisms which divide the two peoples or

whether circumstances today do not point to a more excellent way.

Some of the major issues which have been brought to light in our studies reveal a serious divergence in teaching, standards, and ideas, between the two religions. We have found it difficult at times to say what is the essential element of Islam in its expansion as a military and political power and we have also found it no easy task to disentangle essential Christianity from its Western garb and its associations with European imperialism. But undoubtedly the essentials in both cases lie in the realm of the spiritual and the real difference between the two faiths becomes apparent in a study of the characters of Mohammed and Christ. Both religions will ultimately stand or fall as the verdict of history substantiates or disproves their claims, but a comparison between the teaching of the Koran and of the New Testament makes it clear that no syncretistic plan can ever make the real character of Mohammed approximate to that of Jesus Christ. Mohammed borrowed much from the teaching of Christ. He owed his idealism and the best elements in the theology of his new faith either to Judaism or Christianity. There was little of originality in the Prophet of Arabia. Like his successors he was a copyist rather than an original thinker. His genius lay in his power

to inspire others and to win their devotion, and it was thus that he was able to unite Arabia under a single leadership upon what today would be called a totalitarian policy. It is no real way of approach to Islam by the Christian that seeks to idealize Mohammed and to regard him as a way of salvation for the Arab world as we regard Christ for the Christian world. Islam does not represent a higher spiritual and religious achievement, a further evolutionary stage in the soul's progress beyond the point reached by the Christian revelation. Rather is Islam a retrogression to Old Testament ideals, to a standard lower than that of the Christian. The position it occupies is, therefore, one from which the Moslem will ultimately move to a higher—that is to the Christian position.

Moslem writers today pour scorn upon the very thought of a God-Incarnate. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din says: "The East regards redeemers as mythical conceptions and the West is bound to treat this position of Christianity as an incorporation from paganism. It will not take much time to do it; but the sooner it becomes an accomplished fact the better the prospects of cordial relation between the various races of mankind. The East was earlier in realizing the truth and consigning the mystery cult to oblivion as a piece of superstition. The West must now follow the East.

It has done before. The light has always come from the East. With this we dismiss the idea of God-Incarnate as irrelevant and unnecessary for our advancement on any human plane.”³³

This Moslem writer sees no way of approach between the two religions except for Christianity to throw over its Trinitarian doctrines, the Incarnation and the Cross, and to adopt a form of Unitarianism compatible with Islam. This, apart from any theological considerations, would involve the acceptance of Mohammed and his lower ethical standards, his conception of religion propagated by the sword, his polygamy and moral accommodations to human weaknesses, his advocacy of slavery, his adoption of the veil for women and with it what Turkish women describe as a mock morality. The verdict of history is already showing that along this path lie stagnation and moral decay.

We do no service to Islam, nor indeed to any non-Christian religion, if we fail to insist upon the supreme fact that in Christ God took the initiative in the redemption of the human race. It is true that “the light has always come from the East,” but it shone in full-orbed splendor in the person of Christ. Mohammed’s relation to Christ is like that of the moon to the sun, for the moon enjoys only a reflected

³³ *The Ideal Prophet*, p. 12.

glory as it draws its light from the sun. The East today is increasingly coming to regard Christ as the norm to which all other religious standards and ideals must approximate. He captures the imagination of the Eastern mind because He is the suffering Servant and not the military leader, because He exemplifies love and sacrifice and service rather than power, worldly gain, and territorial expansion.

We have seen, in the course of this inquiry, many occasions when Christians failed miserably to follow the ideals of their Master. We have seen Christian peoples take the sword in the interests of religion, but we know well that this policy was adopted not because Christ taught men the use of force, but rather in spite of every lesson that the Cross teaches. Mohammed took the field in person as a military leader in aggressive Arab raids upon his enemies. Christ suffered crucifixion rather than defend Himself.

The issue has been raised in these pages again and again between the alternatives of force and love. The way of love may be unpopular and poor policy from the point of view of world affairs, but ultimately we shall come to see that the way of the Cross is the only way of life, that either love must rule in the hearts of men and govern the policies of the nations or the world will destroy itself by its hatreds, fears, and suspicions, in a war in which all that is best and

noblest in civilization will disappear. It is because as Christians we believe so profoundly in Christ's way of love that we cannot accept religion—Islam or any other—that is based upon force, material gains, and political power.

Moslem controversialists make great play with the varied modernist tendencies in Christianity, and in their published attacks quote extensively from Christian leaders to prove that we are divided in our interpretations of Christian doctrines, and some Moslems see in this the break-up of Christianity and an approximation to the Islamic creed. What our Moslem friends so often fail to see when they quote modern Christian writers is that Christianity, because it is centered in Christ, can and does defend itself. The faith can be subjected to the most searching tests and in fact is ever exposed to every form of criticism, and Christians do not object to this because they believe in the open mind and welcome the fullest examination of every tenet of the Christian faith. If such a policy of an open-minded investigation of Islam were possible in Moslem lands today much would be gained for we should lift controversy into the realm of scientific research and aim not at demolishing each other's positions but rather at a common search for truth wherever it is to be found. In any case the controversial method

by which the protagonists of both religions attack each other is no way of approach from one faith to the other. The most important fact which emerges from it all is the futility of controversy.

As we have looked back over the long history of the relationship between Christianity and Islam we have found in it not only an aspect of conflict when, through the onslaughts of Arab armies, sections of the Church were practically exterminated, but also one of mutual influence, as when Moslems found through the mystic way a new experience of God, and discovered a religion of the heart, and when Christianity, hidebound by Roman authority and decadent, found enrichment and liberty through the contribution of Islam to the literature and science of Europe. The interchange of ideas was for centuries broken by wars and crusades and we have traced these actions and reactions down to the nineteenth century when Islam, having isolated herself and closed her trade routes to "the infidel," began to decay. Then once again a revival of Islam came from without, and we have noted how Western science, education, and literature worked a revolution in its life until we now see growing up an awakened people, enlightened and progressive, taking their share in international and world affairs.

And so we come down to today (1937). A survey

of Islam in the Near East reveals, as we have seen, startling changes. A new nationalism, based on race, is taking the place of the old Islam based on an international brotherhood, a new material secularism is supplanting conceptions of life that were religious. Will Islam then become a mere political machine convenient to the government and with an appeal only to the illiterate of a country? Will Islam, stripped of its political power, be submerged by a wave of modern materialism? or will it find revival in a new quest for God that will lead along the pathway of renunciation and unselfish service.

It seems certain that Islam will not remain as it is, and as no single uniform plan will ever suit the whole Moslem world it will, in each country, take on a different color and expression. Gone are the days of Ottoman rule, Caliphate, and Pan-Islamism, and one can imagine the disbanded dervish orders of Turkey finding new life in a more spiritual search and a new and modernized Islam emerging in Egypt, adapted to the educational requirements of the day. One can also see Iran breaking new ground through some intensive form of Sufi doctrine. But with it all the old militant Islam persists in the heart of Arabia, where here only do we still see a seventh century religion unchanged, bounded by the frontiers of its desert, commanding an amazing loyalty from the

Arabs, but commending itself to few other Moslems in the world. Arab it was—Arab it remains.

What then has Christianity to offer?

It has to offer the Eternal Christ, as the goal of the Moslem spiritual search and the realization of the Sufi quest.

Mohammed holds the place in their allegiance which ultimately must be given to Christ. Mohammed was the man of his age, the greatest leader Arabia has ever seen. His achievement outstrips in material gain and permanency the work of Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, and a host of others. But he can never be the final goal of the spiritual aspirations of a people. As he pointed back to Christ, unique in character and life, so as the quest is pursued will the Spirit of God point every true seeker forward to the Eternal One, revealed in time, the incarnate Son of God, Redeemer, and Saviour. As men turn to Him so will they find in His life and in His Cross the one pathway to Reality, the only hope of abiding world peace, the only One adequate to the world's need.

With this central idea of the Eternal Christ we must couple, as the Christian contribution to Islam, the idea given to us by Christ, of the Fatherhood of God. No modern interpretation of the Arabic

word Rubb (Lord) can ever fully comprehend what Christ meant when He spoke of God as Father.

And it must be realized that Christians can only make their contribution and preach their message in a spirit of humility; not as though they lived on a higher plane than Moslems, but as those who wish to share with others the riches of their inheritance in Christ. In this task they must separate themselves and their message from all Western political concepts. They cannot go as members of a superior race but as brothers in a common humanity. They must live their faith before they can teach it, and in teaching it they must offer it to those who want it. There has never been a time when the Moslem world more than today needed what Christianity has to offer. Never before has Islam faced forces so disruptive and divisive. Never has an anti-God movement worked such havoc among educated young Moslems as now. It behooves both Christians and Moslems, therefore, to meet and to face a situation fraught with such incalculable danger to both religions. The solution to a world materialism, to dictatorships, atheisms, and nationalisms, will not come by big campaigns and large organizations. Nor is an answer to be found in the old orthodoxy as represented by Mecca and the Azhar University in Cairo. The new Islam that is building a modern edifice in Lahore and Woking

will not endure because it is offering to the human race a largely imaginary picture of Mohammed, and ultimately men will see that the ideal held up to them is not Mohammed at all, but Christ, and in the Eternal Christ they will find again the source of life and power.

The solution will come as honest men apply a deep spiritual experience of God, a practical mysticism, to the problems which face them. Such men will suffer persecution. They will be few in number, but their lives will as ever be the very salt of the earth. They will stand for liberty of conscience against the totalitarian state, for spiritual experience of God in the midst of an atheistic people, for sacrificial service among the conflicting and selfish elements of nationalism, and for an abiding peace based on love in the face of the clash of arms and the advocates of force. In all this they will realize as never before the meaning of the Cross of Christ and the significance of His Eternal Message for the life of the world.

In this closing chapter, therefore, we turn from the politics, plans and ambitions of militant Islamic leaders, from the thunderbolts of crusades, from the conquests of Christian countries by Islam, and from the annexations of Moslem lands by European powers. We turn from world affairs to the spiritual

issues at stake in the contribution Christianity may make today to Moslem people. No apology is called for in ending on this note of spiritual experience, because at long last it will be the spiritual realities which cannot be shaken. They will abide when civilizations, cultures, and empires will have been swallowed up in the conflicting interests of East and West.

We have seen how certain Moslems and Christians, never a very large number, have found a fullness of life in spiritual experience. We have noted how some men, bigger than their creed, have embarked upon a great adventure in a quest for reality, which has provided an answer to human restlessness and uncertainty and has brought them to find life's center, not in force, but in love; not in self, but in others. Miss Evelyn Underhill says: "As Einstein conceives of space curved round the sun, we, borrowing his symbolism for a moment, may perhaps think of the world of Spirit as curved round the human soul; shaped to our finite understanding and therefore presenting to us innumerable angles of approach. This means God can and must be sought only within and through our human experience."³⁴ This thought finds expression in many faiths. For

³⁴ Evelyn Underhill, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-day*, p. 3.

instance, Kabir says, "More than all else do I cherish at heart the love which makes me to live a limitless life in this world." Can we not, in thinking out our own approach to Islam, begin with facts of spiritual experience which at once find a responsive echo in the hearts of others rather than by the clash of dogmatic statements which, however true, do in the first instance separate and antagonize.

Man, whatever his religion, has a vague, sometimes fluctuating yet persistent sense of an abiding transcendent reality. This is man's instinct for God and it is out of this that religious experience grows. In both the Christian and Moslem faiths we find religious experience interpreted in terms of the fellowship and communion of a person with a Person. We have already seen that in both religions when man accepts completely and for all relationships of life, the will of God, it involves a surrender to a personal God who evokes in the human heart a response of love and affection which leads the soul to an intimate and personal relationship with Him. If we find difficulty in employing the term "personal" in reference to God we should remember that it is used because we have no other word in our language to express our meaning. It may be, as Upton has said, that "the word 'personal' is too poor and carries with it associations too human and too limited ade-

quately to express this profound God-consciousness."³⁵

The poet Blake expresses this thought thus:

"I am not a God afar off, I am a Brother and a
Friend;

Within your bosom I reside and you reside in me."

which again is strikingly like the sentiment of the Moslem Sufi who says, "O Soul seek the Beloved; O friend, seek the Friend."

A study of comparative religion shows that religion finds its fullest expression in terms of love for a Person. If we follow this thought through we shall see how Islam, as it came into contact with non-Arab thought and particularly with Christian mystics, absorbed a mysticism which brought men into the relationship to God of Lover and Beloved.

The facts remains, and is indeed incontestible, that Christianity, through its conception of the Fatherhood of God and the Eternal Christ, has given the fullest expression to this craving of the human heart for communion with the Infinite. The Christian therefore, in his approach to Islam along this line of divine love, not only finds points of real contact in the universal desire for God but also has something to offer to a Moslem seeker which will carry

³⁵ T. Upton, *The Basis of Religious Belief*, p. 363.

him beyond anything he has so far attained. Those who profess other religions have not seen in their leaders all that Christians see in Christ. As one writer has put it, "No Jew ever says of Moses—'I need thee every hour,' nor does a Moslem ever say—'Mohammed, lover of my soul.'" Spiritual experience is incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ. This was the great attraction of our Lord to St. Paul, who exclaims "I count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may know Him."

The greatest stumbling-block to the Moslem's acceptance of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the Trinity. As a result of the koranic misrepresentations Moslems the world over believe, whatever we may say to the contrary, that we are tritheistic and worship three Gods. Miss Evelyn Underhill has a contribution to offer to this problem. She says, "The rich experiences of the religious consciousness seem to be resumed in these three outstanding types of spiritual awareness. The cosmic, ontological or transcendent; finding God as the Infinite Reality outside and beyond us. The personal, finding Him as the living and responsive object of our love, in immediate touch with us. The dynamic, finding Him as the power that dwells within or energizes us. These are not exclusive but complementary appre-

hensions, giving objectives to intellect, feeling and will. They must all be taken into account in any attempt to estimate the full character of the spiritual life, and this life can hardly achieve perfection unless all three be present in some measure. Thus the French contemplative, Lucie Christine, says that when the voice of God called her it was at one and the same time a light, a drawing, and a power; and her Indian contemporary, the Maharishi Devendra-nath Tagore, that 'Seekers after God must realize Brahma in these three places. They must see Him within, see Him without, and see Him in that abode of Brahma where He exists in Himself,' and it seems to me that what we have in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, is above all the crystallization and mind's interpretation of these three ways in which our simple contact with God is actualized by us. It is like so many other dogmas when we get to the bottom of them, an attempt to describe experience."³⁶

Moslem thinkers have found a fellowship with Christian mystics when they have approached their discussion from this angle of experience. If experience is made concrete in the Incarnation and if it leads to a discovery that the Jesus of history is the

³⁶ Evelyn Underhill, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today*, p. 11.

Eternal Christ, it must ultimately lead to a theology which is Christological rather than Islamic and which makes understandable to the Moslem mind both the Sonship of our Lord and the doctrine of the Trinity.

In the Bakhti Marga of Hindu India we have the same devotion of the heart to the Lord. Bakhti is the going forth of the whole personality to God. In a Tamil hymn, in which the Bakhtas express their feelings, we read,

"Except for those who melt with love and are stirred in the depth of their soul, the Jewel, resplendent like the Sun, is impossible of attainment," and one of their poets has said,

"The ignorant say that love and God are two,
No one knows that love itself is God,
Whoever knows that love itself is God shall rest in
love, one with God."³⁷

So in Islam Bish-i-Yasin sings,

"Without Thee, O beloved, I cannot rest,
Thy goodness towards me I cannot reckon,
Tho' every hair on my body becomes a tongue
A thousandth part of the thanks due to Thee I cannot tell."

Thus this part of our study seems to show that the modern missionary to Islam would do well today to

³⁷ A. J. Appasamy, *Christianity as Bakhti Marga*, pp. 75 and 105.

trace out the earlier contacts of the two religions. There has always been the fanatical Moslem who regarded the non-Moslem world as "The House of War" and there has also been in evidence the militant Christian who saw nothing good in Islam and who consigned all Moslems to perdition. But neither of these has ever discovered an avenue of approach from one to the other. They have only succeeded in separating the followers of the two faiths further and further apart.

The lines of approach, developed from the standpoint of spiritual experience, lead us to see that in different ages since the time of Mohammed there have always been those in both religions who have appreciated the contributions of the other. In every period and wherever this atmosphere has made them possible many contacts have been established between Christians and Moslems, as for example when Moslem scholars corresponded with thinkers of the West and translated Greek works into Arabic and thence into European languages. But the real point at which the two ways met was on the subject of personal and spiritual experience. The truth of this can be abundantly illustrated in the lives of both Moslems and Christians and two examples may be quoted, one from Islam and the other from Christianity.

From the Moslem side we will consider Al-Ghazali. He was born about 1058 A.D., in Persia. He studied widely, and was one of the greatest thinkers of his age. Dr. Macdonald describes him as "the greatest, certainly the most sympathetic figure in the history of Islam, and the only teacher of the after generations ever put by a Moslem on a level with the four great Imans."³⁸

In the twelfth century a fierce war was being waged between science and orthodoxy and Ghazali fought his way from a traditional orthodoxy into scepticism and from scepticism into a sincere quest for God. In his Confessions he says "I saw that Sufism consists in experiences rather than in definitions and that what I was lacking belonged to the domain, not of instruction, but of ecstasy and initiation . . . Thus I remained, torn asunder by the opposite forces of earthly passions and religious aspirations for about six months. At the close of them my will yielded and I gave myself up to destiny . . . Conscious of my weakness and the prostration of my soul, I took refuge in God as a man at the end of himself and without resources. He who hears the wretched when they cry deigned to hear me." This led Ghazali to abandon his career and to set out as a pilgrim practising the asceticism of the beggar and the wayfarer.

³⁸ D. B. Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*.

He visited Damascus, Syria, and Jerusalem at a time when the Crusades were embittering relationships between Christianity and Islam. We do not find him reflecting local hatreds but living the life of a mystic. His contacts with Christianity must have been many, and from his writings it seems certain that he had read the New Testament. In his *Alchemy of Happiness* he gives what Dr. Zwemer calls "a sort of Moslem version of St. John's Epistles and St. John's Gospel." He gave seven proofs of love to God. Among them are preference for the love of God to any worldly object, the remembrance of God always in the heart, meditation upon God, prayer and worship. His final proof is very striking, namely, "that a man love the sincere friends and obedient servants of God and regard them all as his friends."³⁹

We turn for our second example from the Moslem Ghazali to the Christian, Raymond Lull. There are many points of similarity between Ghazali and Lull as we shall see in our study of this Christian mystic.

Raymond Lull was born about the year A.D. 1231, at Palma, in Majorca. He was an only child and heir to his father's fortunes. His education was planned with great care. As a boy he was the selected friend of two young princes, and his early manhood was spent at the Court, where from his own account he

³⁹ Dr. S. Zwemer, *A Moslem Seeker after God*, p. 285.

became the dissolute courtier. He lost all religion and gave himself up "to sins and the companionship of vice." It was in the midst of this wild life that his course was suddenly arrested. While writing a love-letter to his mistress one day there came to him a vision of Christ on the Cross, an experience of which he could afterwards write—"It was Thy passion, O Lord, that aroused and awakened Thy servant when he was dead in mortal sin." He was deeply moved by what he had seen but nevertheless after a period of reflection he returned to his love-verses. A week later the vision appeared again and he was more alarmed than before, but once more he sought to close his mind to the thought of Christ. Thrice more he tried to write, but the vision persisted and then he bowed as many have done before and since, before the vision of suffering love, in a glad surrender to Christ. From that day life was changed and like Ghazali he found his spiritual experience in a relationship to God, of Beloved and Lover. In one of his writings—*The Book of the Lover and his Beloved*—he describes his soul's longings thus:

"The Beloved said to his Lover 'Thou shalt praise and defend Me in those places where men most fear to praise me.' The Lover answered 'Provide me then with love.' The Beloved answered 'For love of thee I became incarnate and endured the pains of death.' "

Raymond Lull lived in the later period of the crusades and he saw from his new standpoint of the love of God how these campaigns had done nothing to heal the schism between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople, nor to establish friendly relations between Arab and Christian. He says "Many knights do I see who go to the Holy Land thinking to conquer by force of arms. But when I look at the end thereof all of them are spent without attaining that which they desire. Wherefore it appears to me, O Lord, that the conquest of that sacred Land will not be achieved save by love and prayer and the shedding of tears as well as blood. Let the knights become religious, let them be adorned with the sign of the Cross and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and let them go among the infidels to preach truth concerning Thy passion."⁴⁰

The conflict between Christianity and Islam brought to him a challenge to show to the world a better way. He studied deeply the various stumbling blocks to the Moslem's acceptance of Christ, and sought to found a mission to Moslems. He was indeed the first pioneer to blaze a trail from the Christian Church to the Moslem Mosque, and by a call to missionary service to summon Christians back to the meaning of the love of God. He rejected all idea of

⁴⁰ E. A. Pears, *Raymond Lull*, p. 31.

force in the spread of Christianity, and prayed for peace that the Saracens might be enlightened in the way of truth through the grace of the Holy Spirit. He combined in the happiest way the contemplative and active sides of his character. His studies led him to many Moslem writers, and he quickly discovered the Sufi theology and their way of life. It is probable that in his *Book of the Lover and his Beloved* he was indebted to Moslem mystics for a good deal of material.

Blanquerna, the chief character of the book refers to the Sufis, and recalls a conversation with a Moslem who told him of the great devotion of the Sufis and of their method of contemplation. Blanquerna, who has been asked to write a book is greatly influenced by what he has heard and resolves "to give himself fervently to the adoration and contemplation of God, to the end that in prayer God would show him the manner wherein he should make the book and likewise the matter of it. His soul rises to the supreme height of its strength in contemplation, he is carried away in spirit and it comes to his will that he should write a book of rather a different kind from that which he has been asked to write."⁴¹

Raymond Lull, in his writings, shows his indebtedness to Islam in many ways and his use of the lan-

⁴¹ E. A. Pears, *op. cit.*, pp. 184 & 185.

guage of mysticism is strikingly like Sufi teaching. His meditations upon God as The Beloved, and man as created solely to do God's will touch the true mystic note. This may be illustrated from his recorded thoughts which have come down to us. In one place he says, "O Beloved, I come to Thee and I walk in Thee for Thou dost call me. Thou, O my Beloved, art so great a Whole that Thou canst abound and be wholly of each one who gives himself to Thee."

Another passage bears the same thought,

"Said the Lover to his Beloved, 'Thou art all and through all and in all and with all, and I would give Thee all of myself that I may have all of Thee and Thou all of me.' The Beloved answered, 'Thou canst not have Me wholly unless thou art wholly mine,' and the Lover said, 'Let me be wholly Thine and be Thou wholly mine.'"⁴²

The story of how Raymond Lull paid three visits to North Africa, finally ending his life as a martyr at the hands of an infuriated mob in Algeria, is too well known to need retelling here. Love carried him to death and in the sacrifice of his life he exemplified the only way of approach to Islam—the way of love.

A comparison of these two remarkable men—Ghazali and Lull—shows that they shared a com-

⁴² E. A. Pears, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

mon experience. They were both seeking God in a similar way, and experience of God as the Beloved transcended all barriers of race, nationality, creed, and language.

It is frequently argued that these points of contact are superficial because the Moslem conception of God differs so widely from that of the Christian. The tendency among Christians has often been to put their own interpretation on koranic passages which, combined with certain traditions of Islam, give a harsh and sometimes sinister meaning to Moslem theology. Moslem ideas of fatalism might be quoted as an example, but it should be remembered that the language of the seventh century Arab is only the form in which his ideas were expressed and that, with the passing of the centuries, words have come to have a softened meaning and a richer connotation. This applies to Christianity as well as to Islam. The Koran uses such words as mercy, compassion, love, and holiness, as attributes of God, and in our approach to Moslems it does not matter nearly so much what interpretation was placed upon them in an earlier age as what Moslem seekers after God understand them to mean now. Ghazali in his day, and many Sufis today, rise to spiritual heights of which Mohammed never dreamed nor thought possible to the human soul.

Prayer is another line of approach. I have stood beside the bedside of a dying Moslem boy and listened to the spontaneous supplications rising from a mother's anxious heart and have felt myself akin to her in her prayers to God for the life of her son. We are apt to stress the formal side of Islamic statutory prayers as though a Moslem knew nothing more of prayer than the repetition of certain formulas. But human nature is the same the world over and the cry of a soul in distress rises to God from all races. Why, then, can Christians and Moslems not examine together their prayer life and plan to wait on God in a common fellowship of prayer? I am convinced that in this way Moslems and Christians would approach each other in no spirit of barren controversy and antagonism, but in a common sharing of their spiritual lives, in an earnest quest to know God as a greater Reality than before.

Christians have in common with Moslems a background of Judaism. They also share many elements in Islam taken from Christianity, but they are on very strong ground together in the character of our Lord. The Koran refers many times to Christ and accepts Him as unique in many ways. The Virgin birth is accepted by Mohammed. He is called *Al Massih* or *The Messiah* (Koran 3, 40) because, Moslem commentators say, "everything He touched

was healed." He is "the Word of God" (Koran 4, 169) because, says a Moslem writer, "He was born at the express fiat of God." "He is the Word of Truth" (Koran 19, 35). "A Spirit from God" (Koran 4, 169), and commentators agree that this is a title peculiar to Jesus. "He is the Messenger of God" (Koran 4, 169), "The Servant of God" (Koran 19, 31), "The Prophet of God" (Koran 19, 31), and "illustrious in this world and the next." Baidawi, the commentator, says "illustrious as a prophet in this world and as an intercessor in the world to come."

The accounts of our Lord's life in the Koran are distorted and in the main inaccurate because they were picked up by Mohammed from varied sources, but through them all there shines the figure of the Living Christ, unique in His person, glorious in His life, mighty in word and deed, sinless in character, ascended and glorified and, it may be added, according to the Islamic traditions, coming again to judge the world.

We would close these pages upon this thought of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Lord, adequate to the needs of the world, final in God's revelation of Himself to men. His preaching is more a life than a doctrine, it is love incarnate and truth exemplified. "Such is Christ. When has the world seen a phenom-

enon like this; a lonely uninstructed youth, coming forth amid the moral darkness of Galilee, even more distinct from His age and from everything around Him, than a Plato would be rising up alone in some wild tribe in Oregon, assuming thus a position at the head of the world, and maintaining it, for eighteen centuries, by the pure self-evidence of His life and doctrine. Does He this by the force of mere human talent or genius? If so, it is time we began to look to genius for miracles; for there is really no greater miracle."⁴³

The International Missionary Council at its gatherings at Jerusalem in 1928, issued a message, part of which reads thus,

"Our message is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is and of what man through Him may become. In Him we come face to face with the ultimate reality of the universe; He makes known to us God as our Father, perfect and infinite in love and in righteousness; for in Him we find God incarnate, the final, yet ever unfolding, revelation of the God 'in whom we live and move and have our being.'

"We hold that through all that happens, in light and in darkness, God is working, ruling and overruling. Jesus Christ, in His life and through His death and resurrection, has disclosed to us the Father,

⁴³ H. Bushnell, *The Character of Jesus*, p. 74.

the Supreme Reality, as almighty Love, reconciling the world to Himself by the Cross, suffering with men in their struggle against sin and evil, bearing with them and for them the burden of sin, forgiving them as they, with forgiveness in their own hearts, turn to Him in repentance and faith, and creating humanity anew for an ever-growing, ever-enlarging, everlasting life.”⁴⁴

This was a timely utterance for it gave true focus to all missionary work. One who carries the message of Christianity to Islam must ever centre his own life as well as his message in Christ. The test of his work will not be Western efficiency nearly so much as his capacity to enter into a deep mystical experience of God, to know communion and fellowship with the Divine which will ever give a ring of sincerity and reality to whatever he says about his faith. So often the activities of a missionary's life outrun his contemplation. He thus loses that spiritual sensitiveness which would bring him into touch with seekers after God. Will the missionary aim at fellowship with Moslems by praying with them and sharing with them the inner life of calm in spiritual consciousness of God? We are too often busy in getting things done when our biggest task would be to stand aside and

⁴⁴ “The Christian Message,” *Jerusalem Meeting Report*, Vol. 1, p. 480.

watch things grow. These conclusions all point to the fact that the supreme qualification for the missionary is love—the love that thinks no evil, the love that seeks the good of others without any ulterior motive of religious propaganda. We need faith to see Christ the Eternal revealed in the experience of men in many and divers ways. We are coöperators with Him in His purpose for the world. We are therefore disciples or apprentices ever learning our task. If in this spirit of humility, seeking to find help in the worship and experience of Moslems as well as Christians, we are willing to sink ourselves and our Western foreign ways and in a teachable spirit approach our brother Moslem we will find him neither hostile nor difficult. If he is sincere he will recognize the sincerity of the missionary. He may not agree, but he will always be courteous and kind. The Moslem has a dignity all his own, a poise and a certainty about his attitude to his religion which make him a lover of “sweet reasonableness.” Converts may be few but there is much to be done, apart from direct conversions to Christianity, in discovering a new way of approach, in proving the reality of our faith in our lives, in establishing fellowship with Moslems in their search for God and in the building of bridges which will enable the barriers on both

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sides to fall, the barriers of prejudice, misunderstanding and controversial bitterness.

Only as we are faithful to Christ can we fulfil such a trust.

We close with our thoughts on Him, in the words of Robert Browning:

“As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved

“Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!

“He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.

“ ’Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek

“In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be

“A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,

“Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever; a Hand like this hand

“Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Robert Browning's *Saul* (XVII).

APPENDIX

ISLAMIC HISTORY AND WORLD EVENTS

I

THE LIFE OF MOHAMMED. 570-632 A.D.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 570 Birth of Mohammed. | 590 Pope Gregory sends a Mission to England. |
| | 597 Death of St. Columba. |
| 628 Mohammed writes to the rulers of the world. | 628 Merchants from Arabia reach China. |

II

EASTWARD SPREAD OF ISLAM. 632-661 A.D.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 634-7 Battle of Yarmuk and conquest of Syria. | 632-655 Expansion of Christianity in England among the East Angles & West Saxons. |
| 635-642 Conquest of Persia. | By 635 Christianity had spread to most parts of England. |
| 639-640 Conquest of Egypt. | |
| 656 Murder of Caliph Othman. | |

III

THE OMAYYAD RULE AT DAMASCUS. 661-749

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 668 Arabs reach the Bosporus. | 664 Conference at Whitby and fusion of British and Roman branches of the Church. |
| 711 Moslems in Spain. | 719 Boniface evangelizes Germany. |

8th C. Moslem expansion
throughout Asia.

8th C. Nestorian Christianity
in China.

IV

THE ABBASIDE RULE AT BAGHDAD. 749-1258

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 786 | Harvan al Rachid, Caliph at Baghdad. | 800 | Charlemagne, Emperor of the West. |
| 9th-10th C. | Rise of Seljuk Turks. | 1066 | Norman conquest of England. |
| 1258 | Capture of Baghdad by the Turks. | 1096-1272 | The Crusades. |
| | | 1240 | Mongol invasion of Russia. |

V

THE OTTOMAN RULE TO THE DEFEAT AT VIENNA.
1258-1683

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|---------|---|
| 1258 | Ottomans overthrow Seljuk Turks. | | Europe trade routes to East blocked. |
| | Moslem supremacy in the Mediterranean. | 1271 | Marco Polo starts on his travels. |
| 14th C. | Turks enter Europe—conquest of Balkan states. | 14th C. | Renaissance in Europe. Beginnings of Reformation. |
| | | 1384 | Death of Wycliffe. |
| | | 1398 | John Huss at Prague. |
| 1453 | Fall of Constantinople. | 1445 | Cape Verde discovered by the Portuguese. |
| 15th-16th C. | Zenith of Moslem power—limit of Moslem expansion. | | Dawn of the modern era in Europe. |
| | Invasion of Italy. Capture of Rhodes by Moslems. | 1492 | Discovery of America. |
| | | 1498 | Vasco da Gama sails round Cape to India. |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1683 Islamic final defeat at
Vienna. | 1620 Mayflower sails.
Beginnings of democracy
in Europe. |
|---|--|

VI

THE DECLINE OF OTTOMAN TURKEY TO THE REPUBLIC. 1683-1923

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1750 Islamic growth in Negro
Africa. | 18th C. Growing Russian in-
fluence challenging Is-
lamic power. |
| 1765 Rise of Wahhabis in
Arabia. | |
| 1829 Greece independence de-
clared. | 1776 American declaration of
independence. |
| 1831 Mohammed Ali in Egypt. | 1789 French Revolution. |
| 1879 Serbia, Montenegro and
Rumania gain their in-
dependence. | 1832 Reform Bill in England. |
| 1913 Balkan War. | 1912 China civil war and decla-
ration of Republic. |
| 1914-1918 Great War.
Turkey loses Syria, Pales-
tine, Arabia and Iraq. | |
| 1924 Abolition of Caliphate.
Turkey a Republic. | 1918-1924 Republican Move-
ments in Europe.
Mandates and League of
Nations.
Communism in Russia. |

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